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~~E. S.~~
~~1777~~

Small Lect. Room

E. S.

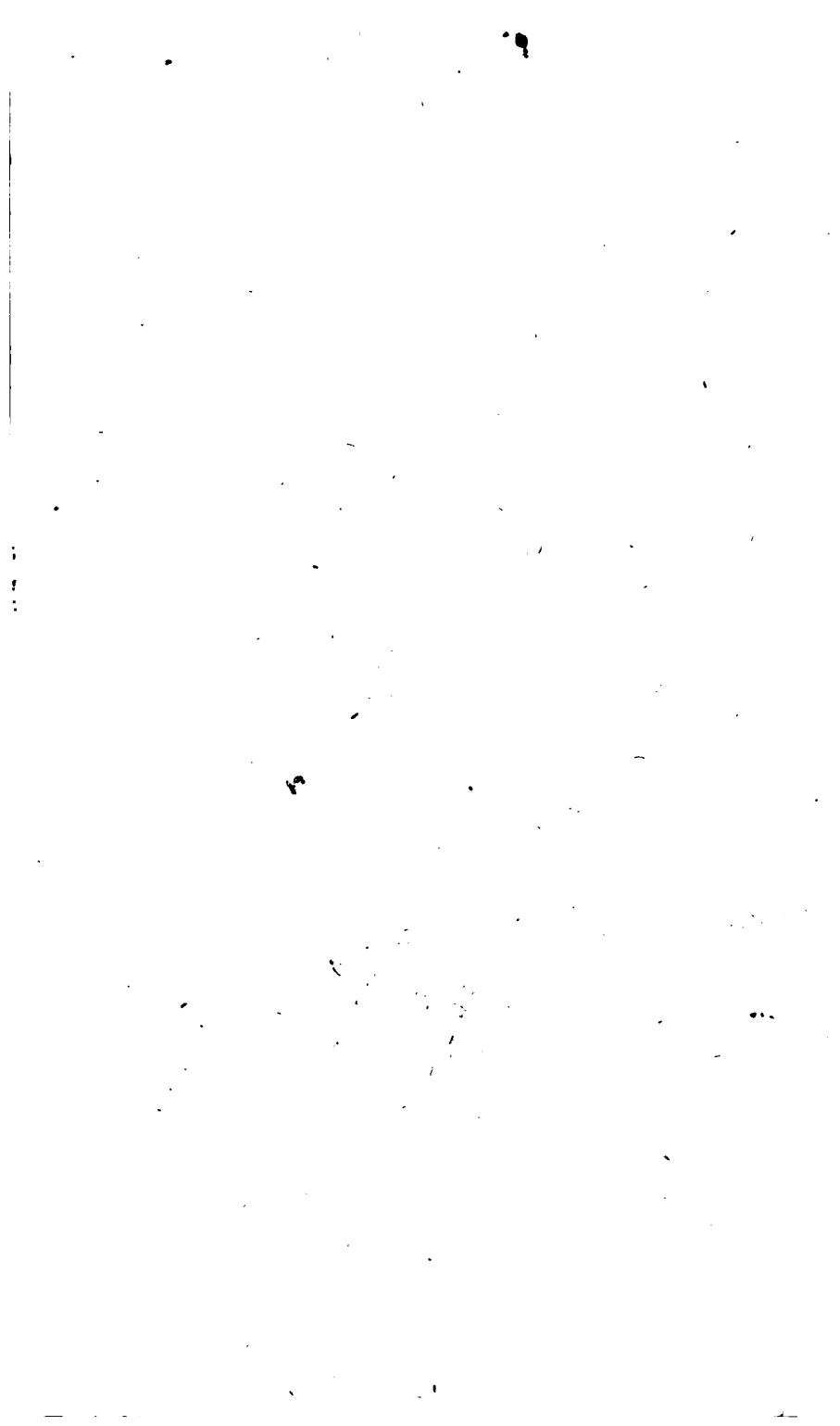


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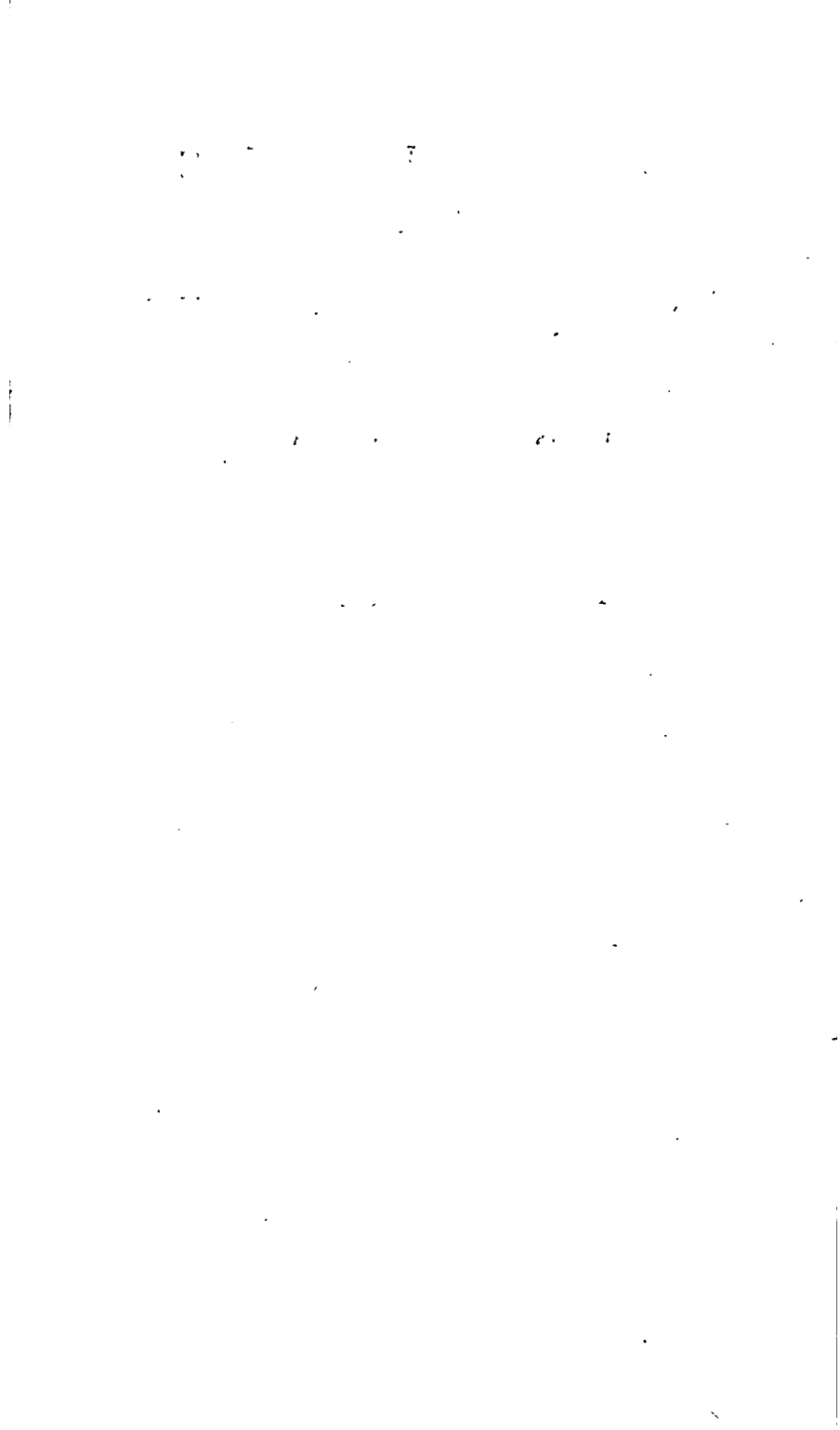
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C A M B R I D G E,

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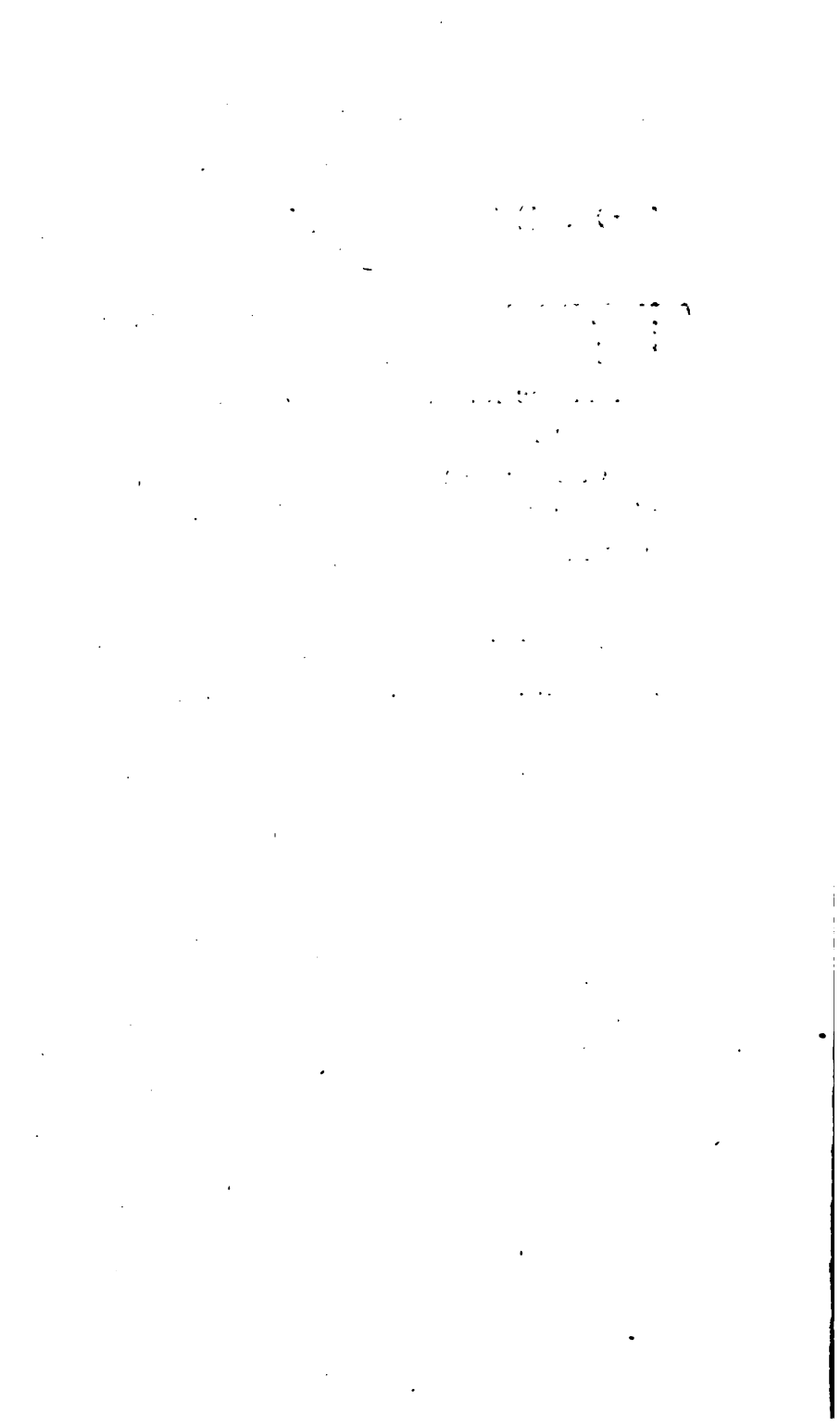


A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THERE is nothing new in this Volume, except two Sermons (the second and the seventh); — an Appendix to the Discourse to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely; — another to the Letter to the late Archbishop of Canterbury; — and two or three Notes: The rest of the Contents have been more than once submitted to the judgment of the Public.

THE Political Principles herein advanced may not be acceptable to all Parties. They were not originally written, nor are they now re-published, with a view of pleasing or of displeasing any Party; but from a conviction, that they are wholly consonant to that System of civil Government which it would be the Interest of Free-Men every where to submit to; and intirely repugnant to that, which it is the Unhappiness of Slaves in many countries to endure.

C O N-



C O N T E N T S.

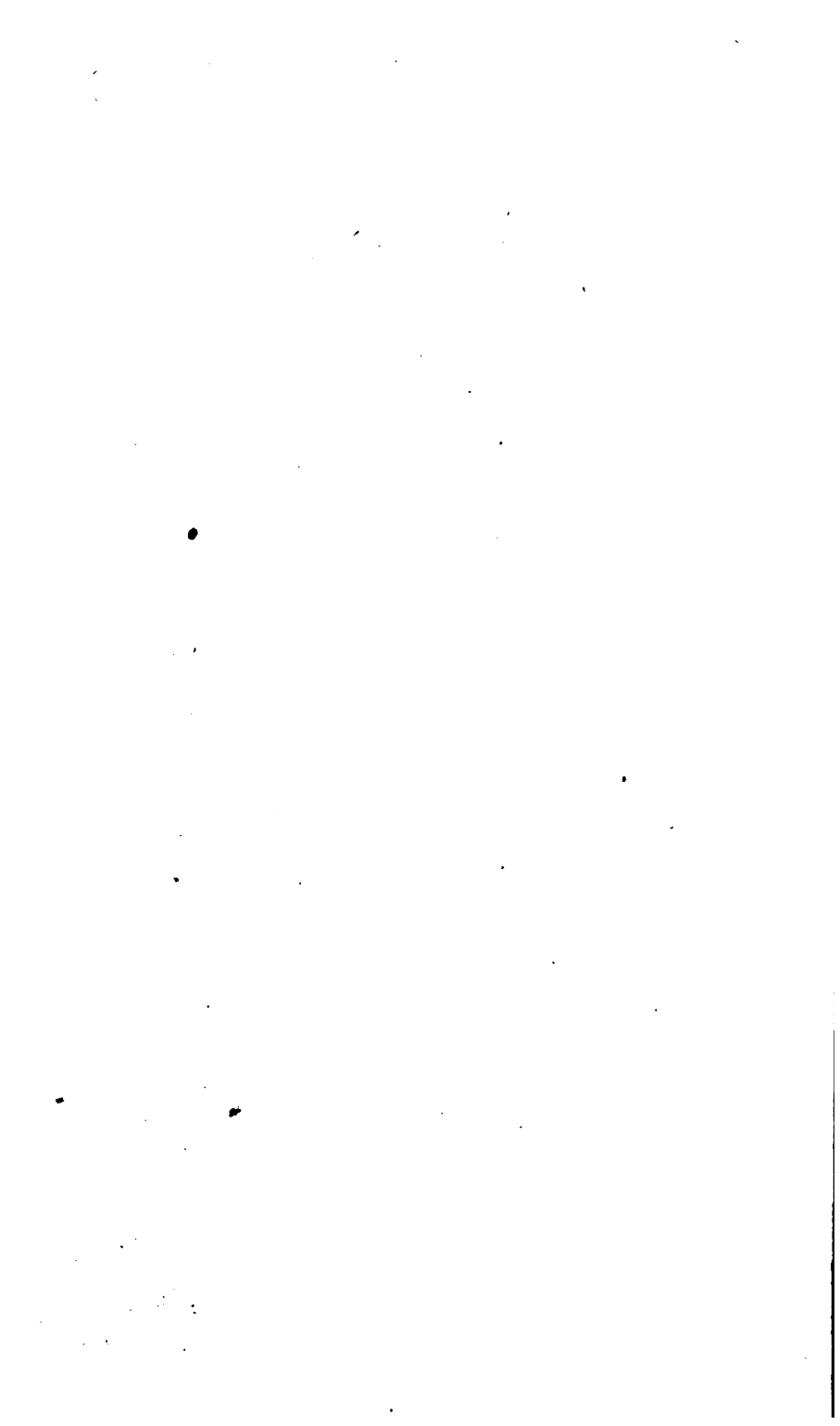
- I.** A Sermon preached at Cambridge, at the Assizes, before the Honourable Sir Richard Adams, Knt. March 9, 1769. P. 5.
- II.** A Sermon preached before the Governors of Addenbrooke's Hospital, in Cambridge, July 1, 1774. p. 29.
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- IV.** A Sermon preached before the Univerfity of Cambridge, on the Anniversary of his Majesty's Accession to the Throne, October 25, 1776. p. 83.
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- VI. A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, Jan. 30, 1784. p. 139.
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- VIII. A Discourse delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely, May, 1780. p. 189.
- IX. An Apology for Christianity, in a Series of Letters, addressed to Ed. Gibbon, Esq; Author of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, first printed in 1776. p. 233.
- X. A Letter to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, printed in 1783. p. 393.

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED AT
C A M B R I D G E,
AT THE
A S S I Z E S,
BEFORE THE HONOURABLE
Sir RICHARD ADAMS, Knt.
MARCH 9, 1769.



TO
JOHN LUTHER, Esq;
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FOR THE
COUNTY OF ESSEX.

S I R,

THE following Discourse was not intended for the press: But the favourable terms in which it has been spoken of by the Magistrate before whom it was preached, together with the exhortations of several Members of this University, have induced me to make it public. You will excuse my addressing it to you; I knew not



D E D I C A T I O N.

any person to whom I could do it with so little apprehension of giving offence; for an intimate intercourse, commenced at an early age, and continued for so many years, hath produced in us, I believe, a similarity of sentiment upon most subjects civil and religious.

I am, SIR,

Your most obliged,

And obedient Servant,

RICHARD WATSON.

Cambridge,
March 10, 1769.

S E R M O N I.

I COR. VI. 7.

NOW THEREFORE THERE IS UTTERLY A
FAULT AMONG YOU, BECAUSE YE GO
TO LAW ONE WITH ANOTHER.

IF ever there was a time, (which is much to be doubted,) when individuals were in that state of nature, in which all independent societies are at present, that is, when they acknowledged no common judge upon earth, to whose arbitration they might refer their disputes; then, force to subdue, or sagacity to circumvent an adversary, must have been the chief deciders of right and wrong.—A law of nature and reason indeed there always was; but however full and systematic its appearance may be in

this advanced age of the world, even with some men to the making *Christianity as old as the creation* itself; yet in the beginning of time, before the human intellect had been expanded by social intercourse, enlarged by the accumulated experience of past ages, enlightened by frequent revelations from the Deity, its precepts must have been too indefinite, its promulgation too imperfect, and its sanctions far too weak, to counteract the propensities of self-love, or restrain the violence of passion.

MAN, considered under different circumstances, puts on very different appearances, and seems to justify the different conclusions of speculative men concerning the debasement or the dignity of his nature: it is not the conjecture of philosophy, but an induction deduced from frequent observation, that if left to himself he would scarcely be rational, would be as destitute of language as of knowledge, and would have no intimations of a Deity, no suspicions concerning the morality of actions, no proper notion of death, or apprehension of futurity. But being designed for immortality, and distinguished from the other animals of the earth,

earth, not so much by his different shape or faculties, as by being endowed with abilities which seem capable of unlimited improvement, whilst theirs, perhaps, arrive at bounds which they cannot pass; he hath from the beginning of the world, and by the first appointment of his Maker been thrown into a social state, made subject to many dependencies, encompassed by a variety of relations which might generate and augment his benevolence, and trained up by the discipline of different civil institutions, as well as divine dispensations, to the rendering his nature more and more perfect in every age,

ALL civil institutions, whether derived from universal consent, (the only legitimate source of civil power) or springing from paternal authority, or arising from superior wisdom, or superior strength, however various they may have been in their original extent, or subsequent modifications proceeding from the difference of climate, or the influence of moral causes; these have all conspired to remedy the inconveniencies attending a state of nature, not by taking away, but confining within due bounds the
A 4 exertion



exertion of natural right, and removing the ignorance of a desolate unconnected life. Christianity has in its turn supplied the deficiencies of civil institutions; not in any wise superseding or contradicting their general principles, but frequently amending their injunctions, and limiting their permissions; and though it hath been infinitely various in different times and places, according to the intellectual capacities and moral accomplishments of those who have received it, yet by instilling into the minds of individuals its genuine spirit of benevolence, it seems to have been universally instrumental in improving the principles of government, in rendering the science of war less sanguinary and savage, and inspiring political bodies, as well as private persons, with a more uniform attention to veracity, equity, clemency, and all the milder virtues of humanity.

IT hath been objected scornfully enough, and most injuriously, that the religion of Christ is a very impracticable and dishonourable system; that it commands such a total contempt of riches and the good things of this world, inculcates such humiliating prin-

principles, enjoins us in our practice so much charity and heavenly-mindedness, such a tame reconciliation, and forbearance, and submission to private injuries, as to be utterly subversive of the honour and happiness of individuals, repugnant to self-love, the first principle of human nature, and wholly inconsistent with the very existence of civil society. But this is a very ignorant, or a very invidious objection, proceeding from partial consideration, and a very unintelligent application of some short and detached precepts, or from a wilful misinterpretation of the whole design of the Christian institution: which concerns itself indeed very little with the powers and modes of government in this world, yet doth not fastidiously reprobate those which are established, nor arrogate to itself the honour of inventing a perfect plan of policy and legislation; well knowing that if every private man, to whose moral amendment and spiritual improvement it principally directs its attention, would with a vigorous zeal and a constant sedulity live up to the full extent of its injunctions, there would be no need of either national defence, or civil jurisdiction. To what purpose the fences of property,

perty, when there would be an unbounded liberality and a common use? the ministers of justice, when there would be no iniquity? the sanctions of law, when there could be no transgression? the resources for general defence, when there could be no apprehension of an enemy; when there would be but one family on the whole earth; one common expectation and a common interest; one soul actuating one body, where all the members being firmly compacted in love, by a kindred sympathy would suffer or rejoice together?—But an obedience compleat and universal to its laws is more to be wished, than expected; for though a general view of the state of mankind at this time, when the colonies and commerce of Christian nations have encompassed the whole earth, when Babylon the great seems falling, and all the states of Europe manifest plain tokens of an internal decay, compared with the prophetic writings of *Daniel* and *St. John* concerning the latter times, and illustrated by the standing miracle of the *Jewish* dispersion, and the great apostacy and corruption of the Christian Church, might probably to a cool and comprehensive mind exhibit the Arm of the Lord
naked

naked in the cause of Christianity; yet doth not its full establishment seem near at hand. The greatest nations of the earth have scarcely heard of the gospel of Christ, nor hath it been any where received but as either polluted with pagan superstitions, or debased by the beggarly elements of *Judaical* ceremonies: its purity and simplicity hath been every where depreciated; it hath been made a ladder of ambition by Churchmen; an engine of government by Statesmen; and though by its reciprocal action it hath strengthened the bonds of society, yet hath its spirit been depressed and weighed down by the earthly principles of every civil institution; all of which, when it shall exert its full activity, it will *break to pieces with a rod of iron*: the *stone* which was cut out without bands, shall in the season which is known to the *Antient of days*, and to none besides, smite thoroughly both the *iron* and the *clay*, reduce as small as the chaff of the summer floor every stately image of political power, become *a great mountain, and fill the whole earth*. Till that time cometh, Christianity neither takes away from societies, nor individuals, their natural right of self-defence; the one may engage in a just war for the
. safety

safety of the whole community, the other may in many cases appeal to the magistrate for a redress of the injuries he receives.

THE laws of society, even the best that the most deliberate wisdom can promulgate, are but inadequate measures of moral rectitude, incompetent judges of spiritual excellence, impotent advocates in the support of virtuous, or the discouragement of vicious habits. Their influence extends no farther than to the ordering of the outward demeanor, to the censuring of the overt act, the supporting the publick peace; they can put a bar upon the door of our lips, fetter our hands, and shackle our feet; but they cannot purify the polluted recesses of a deceitful heart; they cannot probe the festering of envy; they cannot stifle the workings of pride, take down the towerings of ambition, nor dilate a contracted soul; they cannot pour o'er the heart that dew of gentleness and love, of meekness and benignity, of quietness and mutual forbearance, which must be our passports to heaven, and will accompany us through all succeeding scenes of our existence; nor can they stop in its career the intemperate extravagance of any
inor-

inordinate desire. They can provide well enough for the protection of our persons, and are sufficiently expert in throwing a trench round our properties; but this being effected, their whole aim is accomplished; they are quite unable to define the precise bounds where it would become, not a citizen merely but a Christian, not a just but a good man to assert his right against an obstinate invader, or to repel the insult of a personal oppressor.

HUMAN laws permit us to stand on our defence in all cases, and afford a rigorous redress, a kind of retaliation, for the minutest injury offered our persons, or deprecation committed upon our properties; but Christianity is of another spirit. Damages for trespasses, infamy for defamation, blood for blood is the voice of Law — but what saith the gospel of Christ? It forbids indeed offences, in a language as rigid and comprehensive as can be; *thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal*; but it says too, ye shall not resist the injurious man; whosoever attacks your person, and shall smite you on your right cheek, you shall not in the first gust of passion commence an action of assault
against

against him, but rather turn to him the other also; whosoever would prey upon your property, and take away your coat, you shall not instantly prosecute him as a robber, but let him have your cloak also. Indeed these and other expressions of the like nature, such as plucking out a right eye, and cutting off a right hand, ought not to be taken in a strict literal sense; they are short, instructive, sublime, and figurative, according to the genius of the eastern languages, and cannot, without the grossest and most perverse misinterpretation in the world, be supposed to recommend such a conduct, as must be destructive of the peace and good government of society, by permitting murders, robbery, and oppression to escape unnoticed and unpunished.

BUT though this manifestly cannot be their meaning, yet undoubtedly they circumscribe the liberty of redressing wrongs allowed us by the common laws of society, and greatly diminish the occasions of appealing to the civil magistrate.

ALL prosecutions for petty trespasses against nice punctilios of imaginary honour;

nour; for trifling violences offered to our persons, liberties, and properties, which are clearly commenced, not for the sake of redressing wrongs of great detriment and foregrievance, or adjusting intricate claims of consequence; but to feed the malignity of our dispositions, by gratifying our pride and lust of revenge; these are totally repugnant to the whole tenor and true spirit of Christianity. In such cases, the opinion of the world, which hath so much undue weight with every body, may be in our favour, the law of the land may chance to be for us; but the gospel of Jesus Christ, if we think at all about it, (and no doubt, it concerns us to think much) will certainly be against us: By it, we are commanded not to prosecute our right to the utmost farthing, are instructed to appease our brother by a private expostulation, or the mediation of friends, rather than exasperate him by a rigid retaliation; we are exhorted, by acts of kindness, courtesy, and affability, to *heap coals of fire on his head*; which may soften and melt down his hard and unrelenting temper. Thus may we most probably produce in *him*, most assuredly cultivate in *ourselves*, that meekness, benevolence, and complacency

placency of disposition, which is the fulfilling of the Christian law, the greatest excellency of moral perfection to which the weakness of human nature can attain, and to the production of which every dispensation of the Deity seems to have been accommodated.

IN less than 1700 years from their creation, the whole human race had become corrupt and violent, and were destroyed; since then, the family of *Noah* hath overspread the globe, and been divided by the natural boundaries of kingdoms, diversities of languages, and shortness of life (which cannot encourage any great schemes of universal dominion) into a number of smaller states, some of which have been favoured more than others with the divine interposition, and instruction from above; but all of them have sprung up and been overthrown according to the prevalence or decay of moral virtue in them, according as in the hands of Providence they were instrumental in forwarding or opposing his general purpose, the improvement and exaltation of human nature.

THE histories indeed of particular ages, or particular nations, seem, like the separate members of a complex design, inelegant in their construction, and of uncertain application; they are to be adapted to their respective destinations, and considered as constituent parts of a whole, contrived for the production of the greatest sum total of happiness to the species, taken collectively, before their harmony or utility will appear. In this view, (though it cannot be expected that creatures of yesterday should penetrate far into the counsels of Eternity) shall we be able to trace the outlines of a great and benevolent plan for the melioration of mankind, which hath been carrying on from the creation of the world unto this very day; and we may in some degree comprehend, why the light of the gospel did not shine sooner, nor more universally; why its splendor hath for so many ages been so much obscured; why it hath yet been so little efficacious in warming the hearts of individuals to the practising of true Christian Charity, to the attaining the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*.

HOWEVER, as an appeal to the laws of our country may be necessary, till the mystery of iniquity be done away, till the fulness of time doth come, in which we shall all be one in Christ, and members one of another; as this may often become unavoidable in fixing the bounds of property, ascertaining a dubious title, or for the public good repressing the insolence of public office; I must entreat your patience for a moment, whilst I point out the manner, in which it should be conducted by the parties concerned in it.

It would ill become the abilities of the speaker to use the liberty, which this place might seem to allow him, of giving advice to those upon whose judgments the nearest and dearest concerns of humanity, the issues of life and death, depend: We all know, that such advice is by no means wanted; and if ever it should be wanted, we know who hath said; *ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, thou shalt not respect the person of the poor*; even compassion, the most lovely attribute of humanity, the surest characteristic, the never failing attendant of a good

good heart, and to which by nature thou mayest be most prone, shall not sway thee; *thou shalt not honour the person of the mighty* — fear of high dignities shall not intimidate thee, *but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.* Nor will he presume to instruct men of much better understandings in the nature and end of their profession; by enquiring, how far it is allowable to use *colourings in pleadings to conceal the deformity of a bad cause, or whether the worst may, contrary to conviction, be defended upon Christian principles:* These questions, though they are said to have been of importance enough to deter more than one ornament of the profession from the practice of the bar, I will not at present take upon me to decide; but content myself with endeavouring to point out the duties of such persons, as are called upon to give their evidence to fact; and also of such, as are become the more immediate parties of the suit. With respect to the first, I cannot help mentioning a practice, which we have reason to apprehend is too common among the middling rank of our people; there have been known persons profligate enough to play with oaths, and weak enough to rely upon some low tricks of evading;

evading, as they fondly imagined, the whole force of them. Alas! such cunning persons surely are deceived to their ruin; the obligation to veracity doth not depend upon the corporal circumstances, nor is God a Man that we can impose upon him; his knowledge is too extensive ever to be deluded, his power too great to be withstood, his majesty and his justice too transcendent to be trifled with, or mocked with impunity. But supposing, that you are not unwise enough to attempt this, I am apprehensive that the desire of being thought good witnesses; as they are called, the fear of being confounded in the court by cross examinations, together with some private grudge, or partial affection of your own, and perhaps sometimes the iniquitous tutoring and instructing of others, may induce you to go beyond or stop short of your real knowledge; to extenuate or exaggerate circumstances, upon the slightest of which perhaps the whole verdict may turn. But remember, I beseech you, how solemn an appeal to God an oath implies: by it you renounce for ever the hopes of his mercy, and imprecate upon your own heads the full extent of his vengeance and displeasure,
if

if you are guilty of the least deliberate falshood, if you add to, or diminish from the real truth.

WITH respect to those who are more essentially affected by the issue of the suit, each would do well, if he means to be innocent, to preserve a friendly and charitable disposition towards his adversary; to check at once all secret suggestions of pride, repress the eruptions of malice, dishearten the counsels of selfishness, revenge, and all those dreadful perturbations of mind, which, under the shew of providing for our interest or our honour, will unavoidably insinuate themselves during the progress of the dispute; which constitute our chief unhappiness in this world, and in the importunity of which our sharpest misery will probably consist in another.

NOTHING now remains, but that in general, with the great Apostle, we exhort all men to *abstain from all wrath, and anger, and malice, and evil speaking*, to shew a cheerful and dutiful obedience to those, who are set over us for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

And this exhortation could scarcely, at any period of our history, have been more reasonable, than it is at present; when the licentious spirit of faction hath been let loose, and groundless suspicions, jealousies, distrusts, and discontents infused into the bulk of the people; when, instead of lightening the burden, flagitious men are bent upon clogging the wheels of Government, by cavilling at harmless expressions, misconstruing innocent designs, and opposing the most salutary measures; when every citizen affects the authority of a senator, every mechanic becomes a new modeller of our constitution, an impertinent intruder into matters appertaining to the discussion of the most solemn, circumspective wisdom; when a turbulence of temper, an unruly inquietude and dissatisfaction, a riotous contempt for decency, order, and all kinds of subordination, have been studiously excited and fomented in every part of the land.

FAR be it from my present design, as it is from my general inclination, to inculcate into the members of this seminary, the expediency of a stoical supineness, a fastidious listlessness and monkish inattention to the measures

measures of that Government under which we live; or, from a forced and unnatural interpretation of some few detached texts of scripture, to insinuate into the minds of the rising generation the necessity of a slavish non-resistance to such as are inclined to become arbitrary and oppressive.

If ever a time should come, when the sense of our laws shall be wrested; or their authority stretched to the accomplishing the ruin of even one obnoxious individual; when our magistrates shall be warped by personal animosity, biassed by undue influence, impelled by party prejudice, instigated by the impetuosity of passion, to the purposed denying or suspending, but for an hour, the liberty and protection of law; to the wilful impeding or perverting, but in a single instance, the stated constitutional course of justice and judgment; then will it become every honest man to rise up against such iniquity, in every way which a prudent, faithful and sincere regard for the honour, the legal rights and established prerogative of the Crown, for the peace and good order of the community can suggest; for even in the worst of times there would be need of great temper, impartiality, and

circumspection, of a strong indisposition to believe the worst, of a long and habitual piety towards our country, of much backwardness and disinclination to commence a dissention, lest the beginning of strife should be, as a small spark kindling a fire to consume the goodly edifice of civil and religious liberty, which hath been cemented with the blood of our forefathers, or as the letting out the waters of discord to deluge with merciless and undistinguished ruin this fair lot of our inheritance. The most vigilant, however, amongst us hath not at present any thing to alarm his suspicions upon this score; far more danger is there of seeing the authority of our laws overborn by inward rancour and outward tumult, and the vigour of our political constitution impaired by the dissolute luxuriancy of an overgrown metropolis, (which at the first storm will be found as an ear of corn too heavy for its stem) than injured by the encroachment of the executive, of the whole or any branch of the legislative power — a power, *which though not arbitrary but fiduciary, and as such may be forfeited, when the end for which it was established by the community is neglected or opposed*; yet is it far too high to be subject to the controul of giddy individuals, seditious corpo-

corporations, or disobedient colonies * : Kingdoms have been subverted, and governments dissolved, by the people's wantonness as well as by the ruler's insolence; and no candid man can be at a loss to determine, from which source our present domestic and external disturbances proceed. — But leav-

* A little before the time when this Sermon was preached the Colonies had begun to resist the Mother-Country; and I well remember, that I, even then, when the *American Question* was scarcely understood by any person, thought the resistance of the Colonies so reasonable, that I hesitated in calling them — *disobedient*. I soon after examined the question to the bottom, and saw, as clearly as I ever saw a proposition in Euclid, — that Taxation without Representation, real or virtual, was robbery and oppression. But as in private, so in public life, the maxim is true — *volenti non fit injuria* — those who are unrepresented in any state may willingly acquiesce in the wise and equitable government of that state; and if they do so, the taxation then ceases to be tyranny, though the representation be wholly incomplete. That the American question was understood by few at the beginning of the troubles, appears from a remark made by the author of the *Canadian Freeholder*, (a book replete with sound and perspicuous reasoning) — that there were only about twelve members in the whole British legislature who were of opinion “that the British Parliament had no right to lay taxes on the Americans, by reason of their not having representatives in it, chosen by themselves, to consent to the imposition of them, or rather, according to the language of Parliament, to concur in the granting them.” Three distinguished characters are particularized as avowing this opinion at that time, — Mr. Pitt — Lord Camden — Mr. Serjeant Hewet, now Lord Chancellor of Ireland. *Canad. Freeholder*, vol. I. p. 269.

ing



ing these bad men to the perdition, which, in a well ordered state, must ever at the last be the lot of turbulent spirits and pestilent incendiaries: Let us, as ministers of the gospel of peace, co-operate in our proper stations with our superiors, in promoting harmony and good order in society, in preserving a due respect to the authority, and a proper confidence in the abilities and integrity of those, who are set over us: As members of this particular community, in recommending to the youth committed to our care, a firm but sober attachment to liberty as circumscribed and defined by the laws of their country, as subservient to the support of the constitution: Being secure of this, that those who insult the Laws, and affront the Religion of their country, who disturb seditiously the public peace, and lay a foundation for the breaking up of the constitution, are (as our best Philosopher hath said it *, are) strictly answerable for all those mischiefs of blood, rapine, and desolation, which attend the convulsions of a state; guilty of the highest crime a man is capable of, and to be esteemed and treated as the common *pests* and *enemies* of mankind.

* Mr. Locke.

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED BEFORE THE
G O V E R N O R S
OF
ADDENBROOKE'S HOSPITAL,
IN
C A M B R I D G E,
J U L Y 1, 1774.

M O M A

THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

TO

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

RE

THE PROSECUTION

OF

S E R M O N II.

GAL. VI. 10.

AS WE HAVE THEREFORE OPPORTUNITY,
LET US DO GOOD UNTO ALL.

TO a mind, penetrated with a reverential love for that incomprehensible Being, who, at the time fore-determined in his unsearchable judgments, called forth this Universe into existence, and said to the Heavens and the Earth — *BE* — and they were; no subject can afford a more sublime satisfaction, than the contemplation of that part of the infinite design, which he hath submitted to our view.

INCONSIDERABLE, indeed, and nothing as it were is this globe which we inhabit,
when

when compared with the vast *whole* which he hath formed; yet even here we can trace the footsteps of him *whom no man hath seen, nor can see**; even here, *by the things that are made, his eternal power and Godhead* †, so much of his invisible Being may be known, as to convince us that his Majesty is only equalled by his mercy; as to leave us without excuse, if we employ not the talent entrusted to our management, in co-operating with him to the production of happiness, in being *merciful even as he is merciful* ‡.

Those who know most of the structure of the material Universe, know that it cannot have existed from eternity; it had God for its author: Nor was it chance, or the agency of second causes, but an emanation of the unbounded goodness of the first which originally created; and it is the same principle which still continues to support in existence, the innumerable tribes of Beings which ascend, by insensible degrees, from unorganized matter to ourselves. The earth, the waters which surround it, and the air which envelopes it, teem with an

* 1 Tim. vi. 16.

† Rom. i. 20.

‡ Luke vi. 36.

infinity of kinds of animals; to each of which are accommodated objects of happiness congruous to its capacity of receiving it; and all of which are connected together in such a wonderful chain of mutual dependency, that whilst each distinct species separately exults in its existence, pursues with an undeviating steadiness the bent of its particular nature, seems to be concerned for nothing but its own conservation; it contributes to the very Being of every other; and by a benevolent mechanism in nature, which we can never sufficiently admire, nor fully comprehend, but which it is our duty, as far as we are able, to imitate, in promoting its *own* promotes the *general* good.

God hath permitted the beasts of the field to enjoy in a less degree, indeed, but in common with mankind, several of those faculties which are essential to the formation of a reasonable Being; he hath, moreover, united many of them into societies, and in some few instances made them capable of forming general designs, of applying the strength or sagacity of individuals for the security or convenience of the community; and it will appear probable to
curious

curious observers of the faculties of brutes; that, in some small extent, they are susceptible of a kind of intellectual pleasure or pain springing from social intercourse; yet the Godlike attribute of commiserating the misfortunes and assisting in lessening the distresses of others, appertains not to them in any sensible degree*. For exclusive of that care of their young, by which the species is continued, we do not observe, amongst the individuals of animals, any very decisive marks of a propensity to sympathize with others of the same kind; if an individual is seized by sickness, disabled by accident, or wounded by design, he receives no assistance or consolation from his fellows, but is avoided with abhorrence by the whole herd. This may perhaps be attributed to fear for themselves, to an inability to afford succour to others, or to a want

* This distinction between the human species and other animals is noticed by *Juvenal*.

— *Quis enim bonus, aut face dignus*

Arcanâ, qualem Cereris vult esse sacerdos,

Ulla aliena sibi credat mala? Separat hoc nos

A grege brutorum. —————

Principio indulsit communis conditor illis

Tantum animas, nobis animum quoque; mutuus ut nos

Affectus petere auxilium, et præstare juberet.

Sat. xv. L. 139.

of

of apprehension that the case requires any ; but it seems more probable that their nature is, in this particular, especially, greatly inferior to our own ; and this difference is consistent with the different ends for which they and we were formed. Their existence, as far as our reason can inform us, is terminated with the present scene ; ours, whatever reason may conjecture concerning it, we are certain from Revelation is to be prolonged beyond it ; the acquisition of benevolent affections in them would be useless, in us it is to be looked upon as perfective of our nature, and conducive to our happiness in every future period, however distant of our existence : And for this end the last declaration which God hath made to mankind of his will, and which we are assured will, in due time, become the rule of life to the whole species is altogether, as to its preceptive part, comprehended in the *new commandment of loving one another* *, — that is, of exalting the sympathetic affections to the highest pitch.

SPECULATIVE men are divided in opinion, concerning the origin of this prin-

* John xiii. 34.

ciple of benevolence in ourselves; some deriving it from the very state of our nature, supposing it to be as instinctively interwoven with our moral constitution, as an appetency for pleasure, and an aversion from pain, unquestionably are with our animal frame; others esteeming it to be the work of habit rather than of nature, contending that it is nothing else than the casual offspring of civil institution, and imperceptible association, that it is various in kind, and different in degree, according to accidental differences in the education of the human race. But of whatever sentiment ye may be in this point, a little examination will induce you to agree with me in thinking, that it is of itself but a circumscribed and unstable principle of action, requiring the aid of a positive precept of religion, to render its operation permanent, and its influence universal.

It might be expected, perhaps, that amongst the different nations of the earth this principle, as well as the corporeal machine, would feel the effect of climate; that a debilitated *Asiatic* would be more alive to every impulse of compassion, than the hardier

dier inhabitant of the frigid zone ; that in the same climate, and amongst the same people, the *Sex* in general, and all persons resembling them in an exquisite and irritable bodily construction, would be possessed of a more commiserating disposition of mind, than those whose constitutions were more athletic and robust ; this, probably, may be in part true ; yet each one's observation would suggest to him so many exceptions, springing from sources so hidden or unnoticed, that it would be a difficult matter, at least within the limits of the present disquisition, to investigate the influence of either constitution or climate, over our mental faculties in general, or over the principle of benevolence in particular.

It will be an easier, and, doubtless, you will think it a more useful undertaking to shew, that the benignity of our nature is chiefly owing to the spirit of our religion working in us ; and that such great monuments of charity as that which hath occasioned this day's assembly, and which subsist so numerously in our own, and in every other Christian country, are the genuine fruits of the faith we profess. For if this

can be made out, that Christianity has improved the most amiable attribute of our nature, and that which is principally characteristic of our kind, to a degree of excellence higher than ever it arrived at either in a *state of nature*, or of *civil society*, we need not wish for a better argument wherewith to convince the gainsayer of its truth and utility.

EXAMINE then the quality and extent of benevolence in *savage* life; before human nature hath been rendered base and degenerate, as some affect to speak, in truth, before it hath been exalted and matured by the institutions of civil society, or the injunctions of religion, and you will observe it to be a languid, confined, capricious principle. You will see it, indeed, universally revering the rights of hospitality, and sheltering a wretched traveller from the inclemencies of weather, and the pressure of famine: But it befriends not the unfortunate captive in war, he becomes the victim of the most unrelenting revenge, is tortured with the most frantic barbarity. It will not be at the pains of rearing a sickly infant, but, with a more than *Spartan* cruelty, delivers

delivers it up to the butchery of a remorseless parent. It affords no help to the hapless orphan, but buries it alive, and unpitied, in the same grave with its mother. It stretches not forth a hand to support the aged when their strength faileth, but abandons them in their weakness, leaves them in their evil days miserably to perish for want of sustenance; or, so barbarous is the pity, so cruel the tender mercies of uncivilised man, puts a hasty period to a life, which can no longer be of service to the tribe,

If we turn from this shocking view of rude and undisciplined nature, and contemplate it as modified by the culture of *civil society*, we shall find it somewhat softened and meliorated, but still falling far short, in this particular virtue of compassion, of the height it reaches under the influence of the Religion of Christ.

In the accounts which have been transmitted down to us of antient nations, in their most flourishing periods, we meet with no instances of public receptacles for the needy sick, supported by the voluntary contributions

tributions of private citizens. History, it is true, is chiefly employed in exploring the causes which bring on revolutions in communities, in exhibiting bloody accounts of the martial achievements of different nations, in ascertaining the characters of such individuals as either tyranny and ambition; or an honest regard for the liberties of mankind and the interests of society, have rendered illustrious in their age and country. The virtues of private life, the civil constitutions and internal politics of states, are seldom thought important enough to be enlarged upon; or they are passed over as matters universally known: Yet had any charitable institutions, similar to our Hospitals, existed in antient times, we cannot doubt but they would at least have been incidentally mentioned*.

THE legislators of *Greece* and *Rome* knew the value of the life of a citizen, as well as those of *France* or *England* do. But the

* Diodorus Siculus informs us (Lib. 1.) that the Egyptians hired physicians at the public expence to attend *gratis* such as fell sick when engaged in war, or when travelling in the country: This, though a wise and humane institution, bears little resemblance to Hospitals maintained by voluntary subscription.

Heathen statesman did not feel in himself the same principle to encourage, and he found not in his people the same disposition to support charitable institutions, that the Christian doth. It is remarked by a Roman writer, that for above 500 years * from the foundation of their city, there was not so much as one physician in all Rome. But this circumstance may be attributed as justly to the ferocity of the manners of the Romans, as to the temperance of their lives; and it ought not to be considered as a reason for their want of public Infirmaries; since in the later times of the Common wealth, when luxury had made diseases common, they laboured under the same deficiency; and indeed there never could have been any time, when the accidents and maladies to which mankind are exposed would not have rendered such institutions serviceable in a large city.

IN what is called the *Body of the Roman Law*, we meet with ordinances for the regu-

* Cassius Hemina ex antiquissimis auctor est, primum e Medicis venisse Romam Peloponneso Arcagatum Lyfania filium, L. Æmilio, M. Livio Coss. anno urbis DXXXV, eique jus Quiritium datum, et tabernam in compito Acilio emptam ob id publicę. Plin Hist. Nat. L. XXIX. S. VI.

lation and protection of Hospitals for the sick, for the aged, for orphans, for widows, for travellers, for infants, and for almost every kind of charity encouraged amongst ourselves; but it is not amongst the laws of the Roman *Kings*; nor amongst those of the *twelve Tables*; nor amongst the *Decrees* of the Republican Senate; nor amongst the *Edicts* of the *Heathen*, but amongst those of the *Christian Emperors* that we meet with them. And though it was not till above 300 years after Christ, (and considering the persecuted state of the Church, it could not reasonably be expected sooner) that the pious penitence of a Roman matron founded the first Hospital for the poor and sick at *Rome* *; and the munificence of a Capadocian Bishop †, another of the same kind at *Cæsarea*; yet it appears from the history of the very first ages of the Church, that what St. Paul recommended to his Corinthian converts ‡ was practised universally, and a general collection of alms for the support of the sick, the indigent, the

* Fabiola — prima omnium *δοσολογισσιν* instituit, in quo ægrotantes colligeret de plateis et consumpta languoribus atque inedia miserorum membra soveret. S. Hieron. Op., T. iv. p. 660.

† Basil.

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

infirm,

infirm, and distressed of all denominations, made every where one of the parts of the public worship of Christians*. And as soon as the Church was taken under the protection of the civil power, and men were

* Justin. Mart. Apol. 1^a. p. 99. This primitive mode of providing for the poor, which is still practised in Holland, and in some other countries, with great success, appears to me to be the most besitting a society of *real Christians*, that can possibly be thought of. But it cannot be depended on in a country, where places of public worship are in a manner deserted by the opulent; and where a large portion of the riches of every distant province is spent in a dissipated and luxurious Capital. There is annually paid for the maintenance of the poor in England and Wales about 2,000,000 £.; if each *pauper* costs between six and seven pounds for his yearly maintenance, we may estimate the whole number maintained by the poor rates (exclusive of Charity Schools and Almshouses) at three hundred thousand, or about a twenty-fifth part of the whole community, or one *pauper* to be maintained by five families. *Crysostom*, in his 66th Homily on St. Matthew, (Saville's Ed.) tells the people of *Antioch*, that if the very rich and the moderately rich would divide amongst themselves those who wanted both food and raiment, there would not be above one poor person to be maintained by fifty, or even by an hundred of them. If we understand him, in this loose calculation, as speaking of the *Heads* of rich and moderately rich families, the poor in *Antioch* must have been an inconsiderable part of all the inhabitants of that city. — This kingdom now pays in poor rates above three times the sum it paid one hundred years ago; it may deserve to be inquired — whether the rental of the land and houses of the kingdom is not now three times as great as it was then — and whether the prices of labour and of provisions have varied in the same proportion.

enabled

enabled to give way to the spirit of Christianity; were convinced that their charity would not become either a snare to themselves, or a prey to the spoiler, Hospitals rose up in every Christian country. Though the history of those times is dark, yet we may judge of the frequency and importance of Hospitals from this circumstance, — that almost every Ecclesiastical Council, whether Provincial or General, which was convened in those ages, undertook to make constitutions for their due administration.

Most, if not all the Hospitals, which at present adorn the metropolis, and other parts of this kingdom, have been founded since the Reformation of our Religion; we must not, however, from this fact infer, that our ancestors were destitute of charity, or charge the supposed want of it to the corruptions of the Church of Rome; for, excepting, perhaps, one sect of antient Hereticks, there never hath been a community of Christians in any part of the globe, or in any age of the world, in which (how great soever their errors in doctrine or their corruption in morals in other respects may have been) this principle of almsgiving, of
pro-

providing for the sick and needy, did not shew itself in a conspicuous manner. And it is well known that it was carried to so great an extent in our own country, as to require the interposition of the civil power to restrain it; to apply to the public good what the benevolence of individuals had appropriated to private use; for though it had the beneficial consequence of superseding the necessity of laws for the maintenance of the poor; yet its abuse eat up with us at that time, as it does at present with some of our neighbours, the vitals of the constitution, by affording a maintenance to idle and improper objects.

It cannot be denied, that opulent commercial countries are of all others the most likely to abound in illustrious works of munificence; and some may be ready to suspect, that we owe the existence of our own to the redundance of our riches, rather than to the influence of our religion. When wealth, instead of being accumulated in the hands of a few nobles, is dispersed through the bulk of a people, and every citizen feels himself enabled, without detriment to his affairs, to indulge himself in various kinds
of

of expence; it is natural to suppose that ostentation, compassion springing from a remembrance of former necessities, or an apprehension of future misfortunes in trade, a respect to private convenience in the disposal of sick domestics, or disabled manufacturers; some principle or other unconnected with, and independent of Religion, will induce numbers to part with some portion of their wealth for the support of others: Nay, it is well if there are not some amongst us who are simple enough to believe, that they can atone for vicious sensualities by charitable donations, or that a part of an unjust gain consecrated to benevolent uses, will sanctify the possession of the remainder; yet after all the deductions which can be made in our own, or in other countries, from these and similar considerations, still there will remain a large fund of genuine charity, not otherwise to be accounted for, than by putting it down to the credit of Christianity. There have been in past ages, and there are in the present, Heathen nations as opulent and as luxurious as our own; but never hath Pagan charity, either in antient or modern times, exhibited such signal monuments of general
phi-

philanthropy and compassion, as subsist in every country where Christianity is professed*.

NOR considering the genius of their religion is it to be wondered at that *Christians* have a stronger propensity to benevolence than other men: Even the *Jewish* Dispensation (though far from being so destitute of humanity as some would represent it) breathed not so sympathising and benign a spirit, enforced not its precepts of compassion by sanctions so cogent and persuasive as the Christian doth. And as to the systems of *Heathen* moralists, though they are eloquent in their commendation of virtue,

* The *Egyptians* expended great sums in providing food and other accommodations for various species of animals, which they held sacred; and travellers also inform us that the *Banians* in the East erect Hospitals for hurt and superannuated animals, into whose bodies the souls of their ancestors are supposed to have migrated — it may be granted, that superstition as well as religion may be a cause of men's liberality, but the objects of it will be as widely different as a brute and a man. From a careful perusal of the writings of the antients, we might perhaps discover some vestiges of seminaries similar to our Charity Schools; and if the Heathens had that kind of merit in a much greater degree than there is any reason to believe they had, still I apprehend the efficacy of the Christian Religion in rendering the-minds of men more benevolent, and in promoting public charities of every kind cannot be doubted.

and

and precise in defining the strict bounds of rigid justice, yet are they utterly deficient in a very essential part of Christianity, — in impressing upon mankind the performance of such actions of mutual kindness and good will, as must of necessity be exempted from the animadversion, and are thence superior to the controul of civil legislation.

DEEDS of voluntary beneficence, whatever they may be to other men, are not to Christians duties of *imperfect obligation*; they are the peculiar badge of our profession, *for by this will all men know that we are the disciples of Christ, if we love one another**; and they are recommended to us in a manner which must, one would think, operate with peculiar energy upon every sincere believer, for inasmuch as we do them unto one of the least of these his brethren we do them unto Christ himself, our Saviour and our Judge.

IT is a circumstance well worthy our constant remembrance, that we shall be questioned at the last day, concerning the performance of such actions, as every Civil Institution suffers us to omit with impunity,

* John xiii. 35.

and

and even without censure: We may have been just, chaste, temperate; but if we have not visited the sick, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, comforted the feeble minded; if the widow and the orphan have had no cause to bless us; if the poor man hath not found a friend, nor the oppressed man a protector in us; in short, if as we have had opportunity we have not done that kind of good unto all, which no human law compels us to do to any, we shall have no claim to the benefits of Christianity*.

THE Apostle in the text doth not say, as we have opportunity let us enlarge our estate; or aggrandize our family, or extend our fame, or increase our learning, or pursue our pleasures, but he simply bids us do good; and he tells us too, that every man will reap as he has sown, *that God is not mocked, that he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption* †.

* Seneca has an observation similar to this — *Quam angusta est innocentia ad legem bonum esse? Quanto latius officiorum patet quam juris regula? Quam multa pietas, humanitas, liberalitas, justitia, fides exigunt, quæ omnia extra publicas tabulas sunt.* Sen. De Ira, Lib. II. c. 27.

† Gal. vi. 7.



THE occasions of doing good need not be particularly specified to you, they are as numerous as the distresses of mankind: Yet none can be liable to fewer exceptions than that which I am now recommending to your humanity.— If ye shake off the superfluity of your fortune to daily beggars; ye cannot be certain whether ye are not encouraging idleness, and choaking up one of the most fertile sources of public wealth and strength — the Industry of the poor. — If ye relieve common vagrants; ye cannot be certain whether ye are not supporting the dissolute and the abandoned, those who have fled from the hands of justice in the countries where they were born, and who are waiting but for fair opportunities of committing fresh offences against the public weal, in the countries where they are. — If ye contribute towards the maintenance of Charity Schools (though I am far from wishing to throw a rub in the way of your liberality to such Institutions) ye will meet with many, who will tell you, that your munificence is misplaced, inasmuch as it tends to generate slothful habits in those who from their infancy should be inured to labour, and that by enlarging the
under-

understanding of him whom penury will fix to the loom, bury in the mine, or occupy in the labour of the ox all his days; ye only increase the hardship of his lot, by rendering him discontented with his situation in society. But no one can so much as devise a reasonable objection against an Hospital such as yours; it is neither so large nor so crowded with patients as to retain within itself, or propagate around the country the seeds of putrid disorders, nor from the skill and humanity of those who superintend and govern it, can the sick run any risk of becoming either victims to neglect, or, which is full as bad, to the rash empiricism of ignorant practitioners in the art of healing. Medicine is not palatable; no one will take more of it than is necessary, there will be no feasting and carousing at your expense; an Hospital is quite different from a house of mirth, none will go in thither who can help it; none will stay longer in it than their infirmities oblige them; none will be partakers of your benevolence except those who want it.

But some of you will be ready to say, that you contribute largely to the maintenance

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nance of the poor of your own parish; that you have nothing to spare for those you know nothing of; that your rates run high, and that the law is rigorous in its exactions — it is well there are laws to compel you to what your disposition it seems would not prompt you, nor your religion incite you; but remember, that what you do this way is done grudgingly and of necessity; it is given to the law, not lent to the Lord, and the Lord will not repay you.

But you have a large family to support, and if you provide not for your own household, the scripture itself will esteem you worse than an infidel: Do as the scripture directs you, keep your poor relations from becoming burthenfome to benevolent Christians, but think not to turn the Apostle's precept, which probably extended no further, into a cloak for your covetousness; think not that the scripture orders you to accumulate great fortunes for all your children; and be assured that a little bestowed in charity will be a surer support to them, after you are gone, than all that you can bequeath them; for you will have provided for them as well as for yourselves,

bags

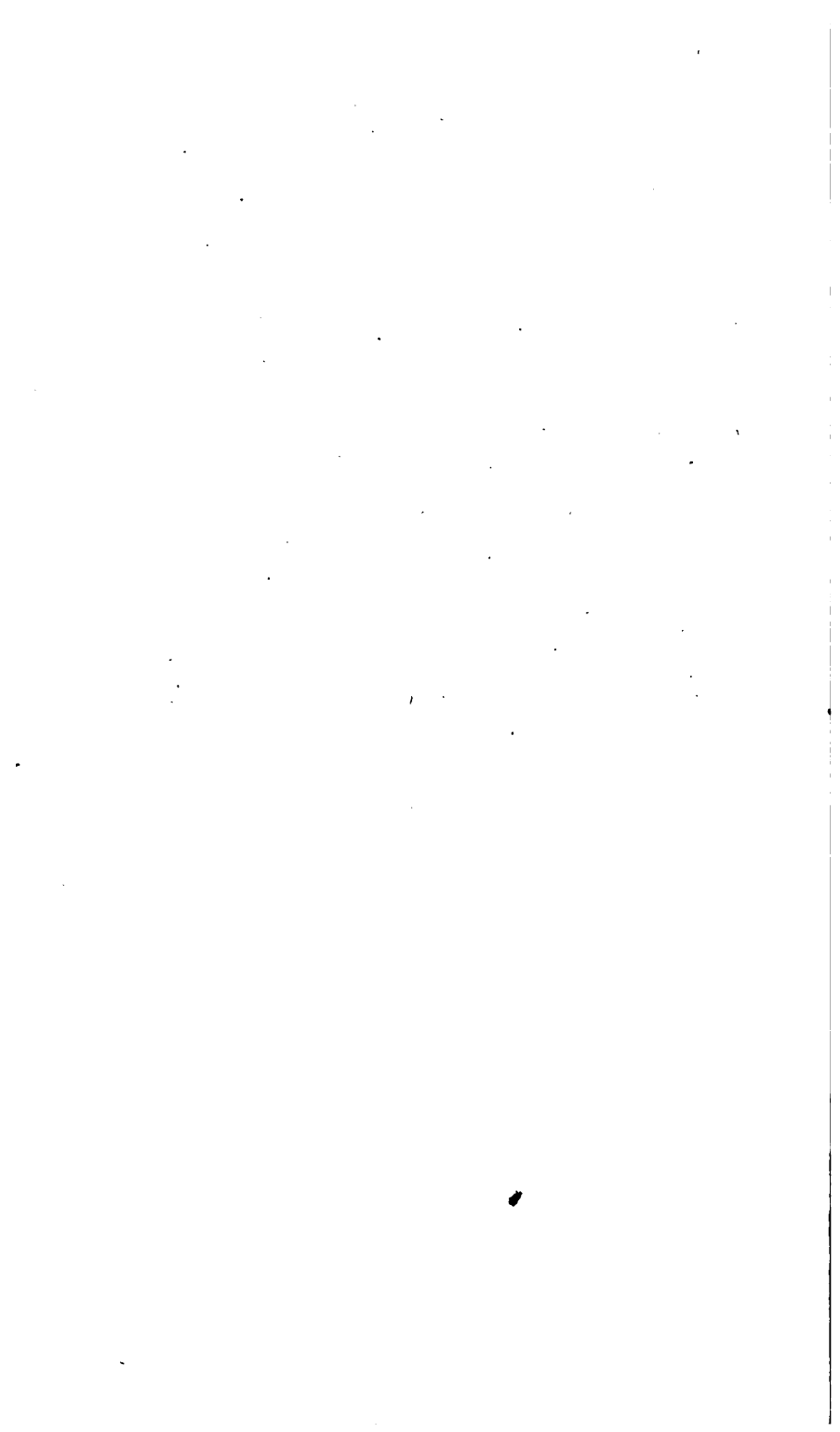
bags which wax not old; you will have made the Lord of Heaven and Earth their debtor, and he will unquestionably shew mercy unto them for your sake.

BUT you must needs enjoy the comforts of your condition, and support your station in life with proper dignity; it cannot be expected that for the sake of a few sick wretches in an Hospital, you should either stint yourself in your pleasures, or diminish the number of your servants, or the splendour of your retinue, or the elegance of your entertainments; that you should either live less voluptuously, or shew, in any respect, a less swelling port than your rank and fortune will allow. Mistaken men! strait is the gate which leads to eternal life; it was not big enough to admit the *rich man* in the parable; his attendants were like yours numerous, his apparel gorgeous, his daily fare sumptuous, his pleasures various, — take care that it be wide enough to receive you. No train of servants, no flatterers of our vanity, no companions of our mirth, no instruments of our pleasures, no gold or silver, no land or houses, no rank or pedigree, no dignity of office, no pride

of learning, can descend with us into the chambers of darkness whither we are going. Before we can enter into the narrow path which leads to another world, we must become as naked as when we came into this; we must be disrobed of all our greatness, despoiled of all our property, of all our enjoyments, it will not admit any thing of what we now call *ours*, but our *Good Works*. These indeed, narrow as it is, (and would to God it may not be found narrower than we believe it to be) it cannot exclude; they will attend us to the tribunal of God; and when we are abandoned by all our connexions, disowned by our acquaintance, forsaken of our friends, given up by our relations; when even the wife of our bosom and the children of our strength will not dare to interpose in our behalf; when we shall stand abashed, desolate, naked, self-condemned, trembling spectacles to Angels and Archangels and all the Host of Heaven; when no riches can corrupt our Judge, no learning elude the accusation, no interest avert the sentence, no power in Heaven or Earth retard its execution — then will our *Good Works* stand forth, not the least of them will be left behind, not a cup of cold water will

will be forgotten, not this our little labour of love towards the sick and destitute will be overlooked — then will every good work which we have done, and this amongst the rest, stand forth in arrest of Judgment; it will powerfully plead our cause, and instead of a curse, the reward of our disobedience, it will pluck down for us a blessing from our Judge. — *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me**.

• Mat. xxv. 34.



The Principles of the Revolution vindicated,

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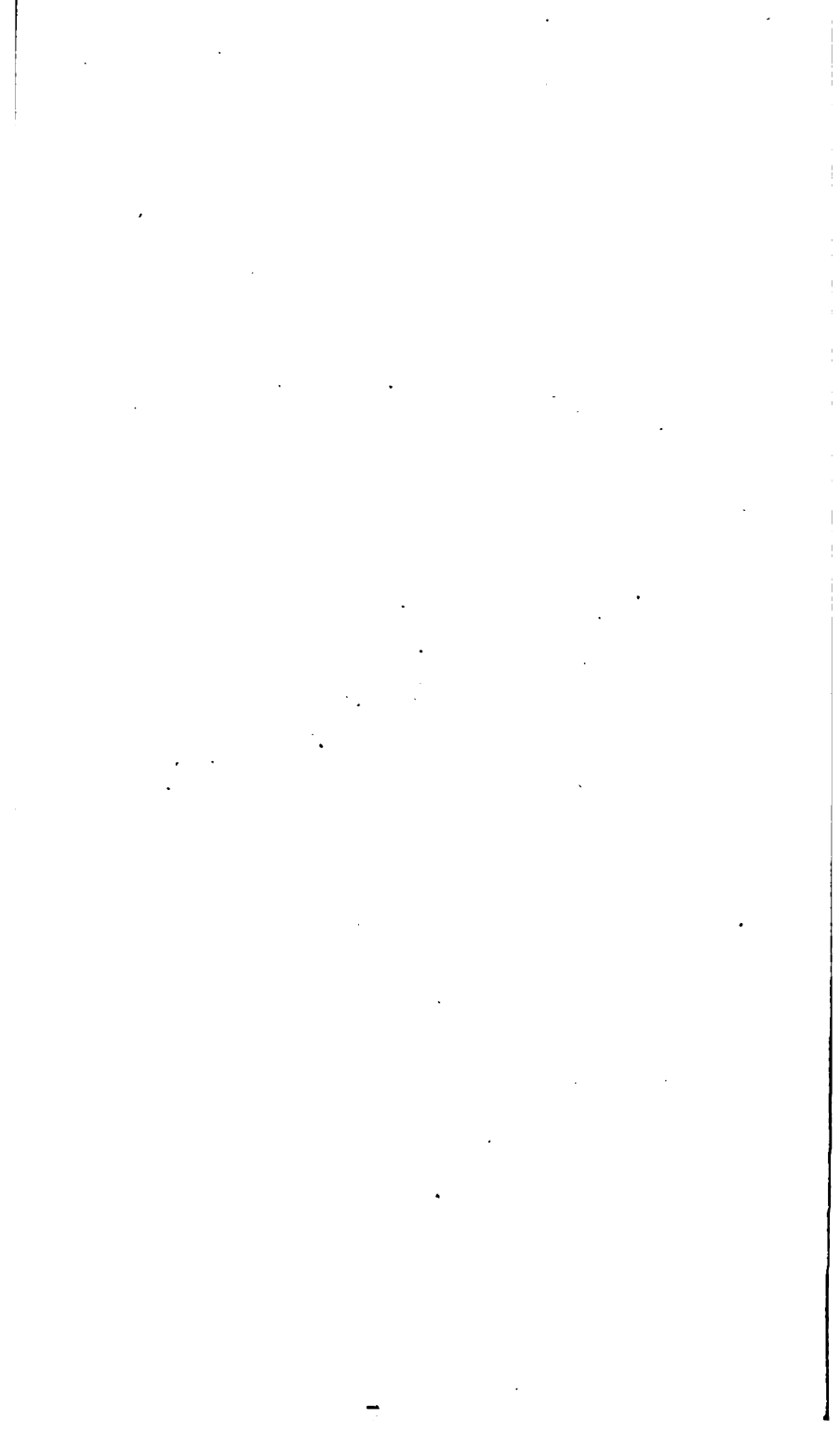
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

MAY 29, 1776.

D 4



TO HIS GRACE
AUGUSTUS-HENRY,
DUKE OF GRAFTON,
CHANCELLOR
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

My LORD DUKE,

THE principles maintained in the following Discourse have of late become generally unfashionable, and exposed the Author of it to some little misrepresentation even in this place; he conceives them however to be founded in truth, or he would not have either thus publicly avowed them to the world, or inscribed them
to

D E D I C A T I O N.

to your Grace; but have waited for
some other opportunity of testifying
the gratitude, with which he has the
honour to be,

My LORD,

Your GRACE's

Much obliged Servant,

The AUTHOR.

Cambridge,
June 3, 1776.

S E R M O N I I I .

R O M . X I I I . 3 , 4 .

RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO GOOD WORKS, BUT TO THE EVIL. WILT THOU THEN NOT BE AFRAID OF THE POWER? DO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, AND THOU SHALT HAVE PRAISE OF THE SAME: FOR HE IS THE MINISTER OF GOD TO THEE FOR GOOD. —

MANKIND may be considered as one great aggregate of equal and independent individuals, whom various natural and moral causes have been contributing for above four thousand years to disperse over the surface of the earth. That the earth has never yet, since the universal deluge, been stocked with a third part of the
inhab-

inhabitants it is able to sustain, has been chiefly owing to the ravages of war, excited in opposition to the principle of natural equality here advanced. For what else almost is the history of our Species, but the history of its destruction? it is blotted in every page with the blood of millions, who have either nobly fallen in asserting the great rights of nature against the encroachments and abuses of civil Society, or else of those who have stupidly suffered themselves to be sacrificed in supporting that reproach to human nature, which derogates equally from the honour of those who suffer it; and from the glory of those who use it, Despotism,

EVERY individual of our Species is endowed with an aptness and ability of injuring every other with whom he has any intercourse; from hence is derived the expediency of forming civil Societies, that each individual may avail himself of the common strength in resisting private oppression; but this expediency can never become a reason, why a few men of like passions with others, and no better than the rest of their kind, should be permitted in
any

any age or country to tyrannise over their fellows by nature, *to lift up their hearts above their Brethren* *.

WITH respect to the great blessings of our being, God, as an impartial parent, has put us all upon a level; we are all sprung from the same stock, born into the world under the same natural advantages, the earth nourishes us all with the same food, pours forth the same general beverage for us all, defends us all from the intemperature of the seasons with the same coverings, we all breathe the same air, enjoy the same light, are warmed by the same sun, refreshed by the same rains, recruited by the same sleep.— This equal distribution of natural good, is accompanied with an equality of natural faculties, by which we are enabled to enjoy it. The utmost period of human life is much the same to all the nations of the earth; intemperance every where shortens this period; but temperance cannot generally lengthen it to a much greater extent in one climate, than in another; the inhabitants of the temperate Zones have in this point no advantage over

* Deut. xvii. 20.

the rest of their Species ; they are not formed with bodies more lasting, or more exempt from external injury or internal decay, than their neighbours on each side ; and as to the individuals in particular climates, no one has either more senses, or the same senses in greater perfection, than thousands of his fellows. — The same equality is observable in our intellectual endowments ; civil culture indeed puts a distinction between individuals, which the state of nature is a stranger to ; but even this distinction, great as it may seem in some instances, is in all greater in appearance than in reality ; the faculties of perceiving, retaining, discerning ; of comparing, compounding, and abstracting our Ideas, are as quick and as extensive in the lowest classes of life, as in the highest ; the difference consists, in their being exerted upon different objects. Some disparity, it is true, with respect to corporal strength and intellectual ability, may be observed, when we compare together the most perfect of our Species with the most imperfect ; yet this difference not only becomes less and less, as we increase the numbers compared together ; ceasing entirely, when we take in the whole ; but cannot,
even

even where it does subsist in the extreme degree, induce amongst free agents any natural dependence or inequality, any right to dominion on the one hand, or obligation to subjection on the other.

THE Analogy of nature leads us to the same conclusion : Amongst the various orders of Beings, which rise by imperceptible gradations from unanimated matter to Man, not one has yet been discovered, in which the equality and independence of individuals is not preserved. We may observe many whole ranks of creatures contributing at the expence of their own existence to the support of that of others ; but this general subordination of different classes, has no relation to the subjection of one individual to another in the same class. We may observe, moreover, in some particular classes, many individuals uniting into a kind of community, feeding and sleeping in herds and flocks, assembling themselves together at stated times and in particular places, and making their migrations in large companies ; but this disposition for Society, whether you ascribe it to the timidity, the affection, the mechanism of their respective
natures ;

natures; from whatever principle you derive it, certainly does not seem to proceed from the superiority of any one individual or of any number of individuals over the rest. An inferiority of one Species of Beings to another, and an equality of individuals in the same Species, are general Laws of nature, which pervade the whole System.

NOR has God, in the particular revelations of his will which he hath made, delivered any thing subversive of the conclusion here drawn from the contemplation of the general system of nature which he hath formed. When he blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, *be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*; his benediction was general and equal to the Patriarch and his three sons, and in them, to their respective posterities, by whom the whole earth has been overspread; and when he further said, *the fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered*; he did not by this great charter, under which man claims dominion over the other
animals

animals of the earth, give any one man dominion over another.

THE natural equality and independence of individuals here contended for, is not only the great source, from which that part of the System of natural law, which explains the duties of all men towards all in their individual capacity, and of all independent States towards each other in their collective capacity, is derived; but is also the surest foundation of all just reasoning concerning the origin and extent of civil Government in every part of the world. For, this principle being admitted, that, antecedent to all voluntary compact, every individual is equal to every other; it follows as an easy consequence, that the just superiority of any one man, or of any order and succession of men in any community, over the other members which compose it, must spring from their express appointment and free consent; — that no one individual can have a right to give his consent for any other; nor any one generation of men, a right to establish any form of Government, which their Children will not have an equal right to alter or abolish as they think fit, —

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that

that as no individual can be compelled to give his consent to become a member of any civil community, it may be doubted whether he can be compelled to continue a member, unless in cases of his delinquency against the laws of nature, or against such laws of Society as he himself has either explicitly assented to or tacitly acquiesced in, or unless a perpetual continuance in the community made part of the compact by which he entered into it; — that the Authority of the supreme Magistrate to restrain natural liberty, and to dispose of personal property, may be circumscribed in its extent, defined in its quality, and limited in its duration, according to the mere good pleasure of those who entrust him with it; — that when a civil Governor violates the Constitution of his country, or in other words, the compact made between himself and those who have condescended to be governed by him, he forfeits all title to the distinction, which his equals had for certain ends and purposes thought proper to confer upon him; — that Kings are not to look upon their Kingdoms as private estates, which they have an unconditional right to possess; nor to consider themselves as superior

rior to the laws, or their subjects as slaves, who are to fall down, like the Idolaters of old, and worship the work of their own hands.

THESE and many other equally important truths concerning the nature of civil Authority, were either not generally understood, or not generally received amongst us, till after the Revolution. The People and Parliament indeed, in the time of Charles the First, seem to have comprehended the great outlines of civil liberty; but imagining, that it could not become complete, unless all men were reduced to the level of the state of nature, they overturned the Constitution; and by finally submitting to the daring usurpations of Cromwell, they brought the nation under a more debasing and deplorable Servitude than ever it had experienced under the most arbitrary of its princes. Thanks be to God, that as on this day we were freed from Republican Tyranny, and restored to that form of Government, which justly excites the envy of every modern nation, and which no antient nation, in the opinion of the greatest Politician

tician of Imperial Rome ever enjoyed. The miseries which preceded the Restoration, the causes which under God's especial providence produced it, and the misfortunes which followed it, from its being accomplished without subjecting the King to proper conditions, or from some inherent malady in the then Constitution, are all too notorious to be enlarged upon before this assembly. The misfortunes of that Family, terminated in the safety of these Kingdoms; but God forbid, we should insult the Ashes of the dead, or the distresses of the living, by a minute investigation of their errors in Government; especially, as it is not probable, that the subversion of the Constitution will ever again be attempted by the same means which they used. There are in truth other means less obvious, but more dangerous, by which as arbitrary a System of Government may in some future period be established amongst us, as already prevails in most of the states of Europe: We hope and trust, this period is at a great distance; but the following reflections will not suffer us to entertain a doubt of the possibility at least of its future existence.

IT

It is possible then, that the very small part of the subjects of this mighty empire, with which the right of electing a Representation for the whole is at present lodged, may become so corrupted and abandoned in their choice, as to elevate to that high distinction men of arbitrary principles, or of flagitious lives and strangers to all principle, or of ruined fortunes and fitted for every species of political prostitution; — it is possible, that a majority of such a Representation may betray their trust, may sacrifice their honour to their interest, may become poor through Luxury, and profligate through poverty; — it is possible, that a System of reciprocal corruption may take place between a bad Minister and such a venal Representation, that he may bribe them with the public money, and that they may profusely grant him the public money in order to share in the plunder of the people; — it is possible, that from an increase of commerce and an extension of empire, the influence of the Crown may be so far enlarged, as to enable any Minister to lay an undue Bias upon the judgments of individuals in both Houses of Parliament, by distributing amongst them either private

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pensions,

pensions, or the lucrative employments of public trust; fear may compel some, gratitude may induce others, if not to support, at least to acquiesce in measures, which they do not approve; and an interested expectation may operate generally to the same end; — it is possible, that under such circumstances, the foundations of the Constitution may be gradually undermined, and the great fabric of civil liberty finally subverted, by the very formality of law, and by the immediate agency of the very powers destined to support it; — it is possible, lastly, that the bulk of the people, mistaking the forms and shadows of the Constitution for its substance and reality, may not be sensible of their danger, till they are borne down to the earth under the pressure of Taxes; may not be roused from their Lethargy, till they are fretted and galled by the chains of Slavery; Then however at last, we are persuaded, they will not degenerate from the blood of their ancestors, but with united hands and hearts drag forth to condign punishment the most pestilent of all Traytors, the traytors against the Constitution and the common safety.

WHEN-

WHENEVER this melancholy scene shall take place amongst us, that the legislative and executive Authority shall (though not in name and appearance, yet) in effect and reality become united in the same person, (at the distant prospect of which every friend of liberty must shudder with horror,) Government will not want men to support its pretensions with the shadow of reasoning.

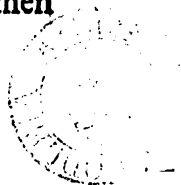
WE grant you, they will say, the Crown of England is limited in its operation by the laws of our Constitution, as forcibly as the meanest of its subjects; for we abhor the doctrines of passive obedience and divine right, as of foreign growth, and first introduced amongst us by some slavish Divines in the reigns of James the First and his Successor; we heartily reprobate such principles, as repugnant alike to reason and revelation; we are not of those, who cannot distinguish between resistance and rebellion; for we venerate the principles of the Revolution, and thinking that the bond of union between a King of England and his people is then broken, when Government is administered more by the fluctuating will of an

Individual, than by the settled laws of the community, we are of opinion that the people may conscientiously resist the usurpation of the Crown, even to the altering of the Succession itself; But what of this has happened now? Has the King by his regal Authority alone abrogated, changed, or suspended any of your antient laws? Has he exercised his prerogative in a manner unprecedented, or stretched its influence beyond the boundary claimed by his Ancestors and allowed by yours? Has he screened his favourite Ministers from public Justice by hasty dissolutions of Parliament? Has he attempted to borrow money of his Subjects, and imprisoned, or otherwise maltreated those who refused to lend it? Has he levied any taxes, which did not originate with, and were not imposed by your own representatives? Has he raised, or kept up a standing Army, without the consent of Parliament? Has he refused to hear the petitions of his people, or construed the petitioners Libellers? Has he displaced any conscientious Judges for not declaring that to be Law, which was merely arbitrary, or filled the Bench with the refuse of the Bar? Has he erected by his own fiat any new
Judi-

Judicatures, or changed the forms of proceeding in the old? In short, has he done any one public Act, which is not sanctified by the Laws of his Country, which is not stamped with the signature of the whole Legislature? Your Ancestors, who effected the Revolution, as well as their Ancestors, who resisted Charles, owned it Rebellion to resist a King who governed by Law; and what has your King done, but execute the Laws enacted by your Ancestors, or by yourselves? What have you to complain of? The King, you say, is but the chief Magistrate of the nation — true — suffer him however as that Magistrate to execute the Laws according to the nature of his Office. His Authority, you contend, is limited by your wisdoms — allowed — but within whatever narrow limits you may wish to confine his executive Authority, the legislative Authority of the State you must grant to be universal in extent, supreme in degree, irresistible in operation; you must grant to the Government an unconditional supremacy over every individual composing the community subject to its Jurisdiction, or you will introduce into the bosom of Society that very liberty of a state of nature, which
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it was at first instituted to regulate and restrain. — No, it might be answered; the power of every Legislature upon earth, even of the most uncorrupt and uninfluenced, is in its very nature fiduciary, and of consequence not omnipotent. It may crush indeed with the weight of government every insurgent against its supremacy, it may be deaf to the petitions of millions, and treat the judgment of a majority of its subjects with contemptuous neglect; but it cannot make virtue become vice, nor alter the relations of things. It stands itself in a certain relation of infinite inferiority to the God of nature, whose Laws, whether natural or revealed, it cannot transgress without impiety; — it stands in another relation of perfect equality to every other independent state, whose rights it cannot violate without injustice; — it stands in another relation of conditional superiority to its own subjects, whose general interests it cannot oppose without Tyranny. For there may be a Tyranny of the whole Legislature, as well as of one of its members; the Tyranny of a King consists in making his will the Law, the Tyranny of a Legislature consists in making private interest a main principle of public

public conduct, and the Law of course an instrument of oppression to the people in general. A Legislature may frequently err, and enact Laws injurious to the common weal; yet is not Tyranny to be wantonly imputed to it for such errors; nothing less than a general defect in principle, proceeding from external influence, and producing a general corruption of its members, can entitle it to that Appellation. Of this kind of Tyranny we have hitherto had no example in our History; for our Parliaments have hitherto protected us against the ambition of our Princes; and we trust, they ever will protect us: If however in the vicissitude of human things, the contrary should happen; — if the Nobility, forgetting the duty they owe the people in return for the rank and distinction they enjoy above the other members of the community, should ever abet the arbitrary designs of the Crown; — if the Commons should become so wholly selfish and corrupt, as to be ready to support any Men and any Measures; — if lastly, the King should be so ignorant of his true interest, or so ill advised, as to use such degenerate Parliaments as the tools of a Tyrannic Government; — then



then we have no doubt in asserting, that the people will have a full right to resume the reins of Government into their own hands, to lop off the rotten gangrened members, and to purge the corruptions of the body politic in any manner they shall think most meet. — But who shall be the Judge, whether the Legislature hath violated the ends of its establishment, or not? Who? but those, by whose Authority it was at first ordained, and for whose benefit it is still maintained, the People; the People are not made to swell the dignity of a Legislature, but the Legislature is every where established to promote the interests of the people. No one, it is to be hoped, will so purposely mistake my meaning, as to accuse me of erecting a few factious incendiaries, the indebted discontented dregs of a nation, nor even such interested leaders of opposition, as make a trade of their abilities, into a tribunal, before whose inquisition the Majesty of the Legislature ought to stoop with reverence; Men of this stamp ought to give no disturbance to any Government; to a good one they are contemptible, and to a bad one they are not formidable; for they can never acquire the general confidence of the
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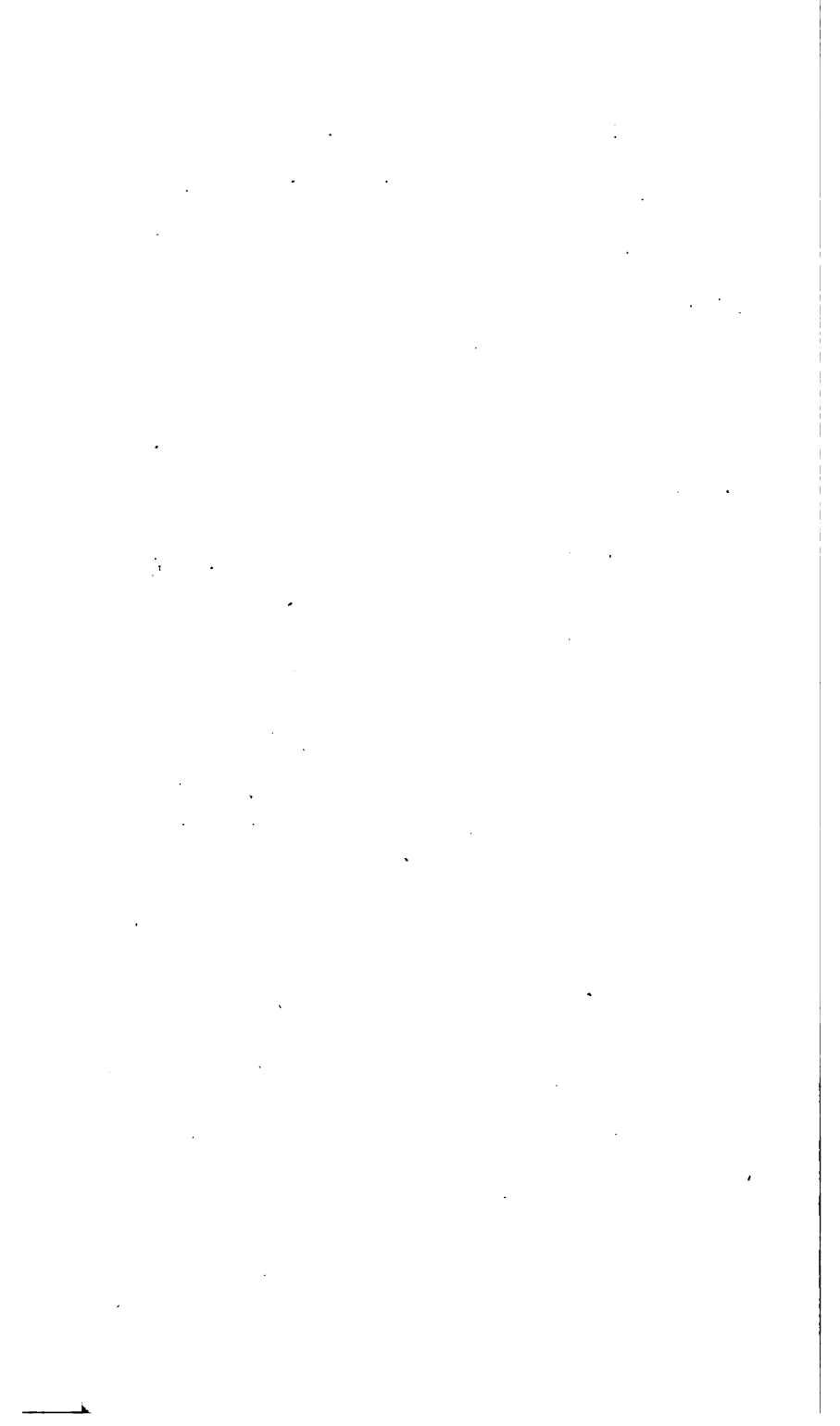
the people; and without that, every effort against an established Government is, and ought to be, ruinous to those who make it: Without that, Charles the Second had never been restored to these Kingdoms, nor James the Second driven from them. To the People then, I repeat it, is the Legislature ultimately accountable for the execution of its trust. God forbid, that our Governors should at any time so far neglect their duties, as to make it necessary for the people to sit in judgment upon their conduct; for their verdict is usually written with the sword, and registered in blood.

EVERY one knows the desolation, which overspread this Land in the time of Charles the First; but no one can tell, whether God will be so merciful to us, as to terminate such another war by so favourable an Issue, as that which we this day commemorate: And this should induce us all to deliberate and hesitate to count the cost and weigh the expected benefit, before we, by word or deed, blow up into a flame to consume the land, that fire of Civil discord, which God, as a punishment for our infidelity and immorality, has suffered to be already kindled.

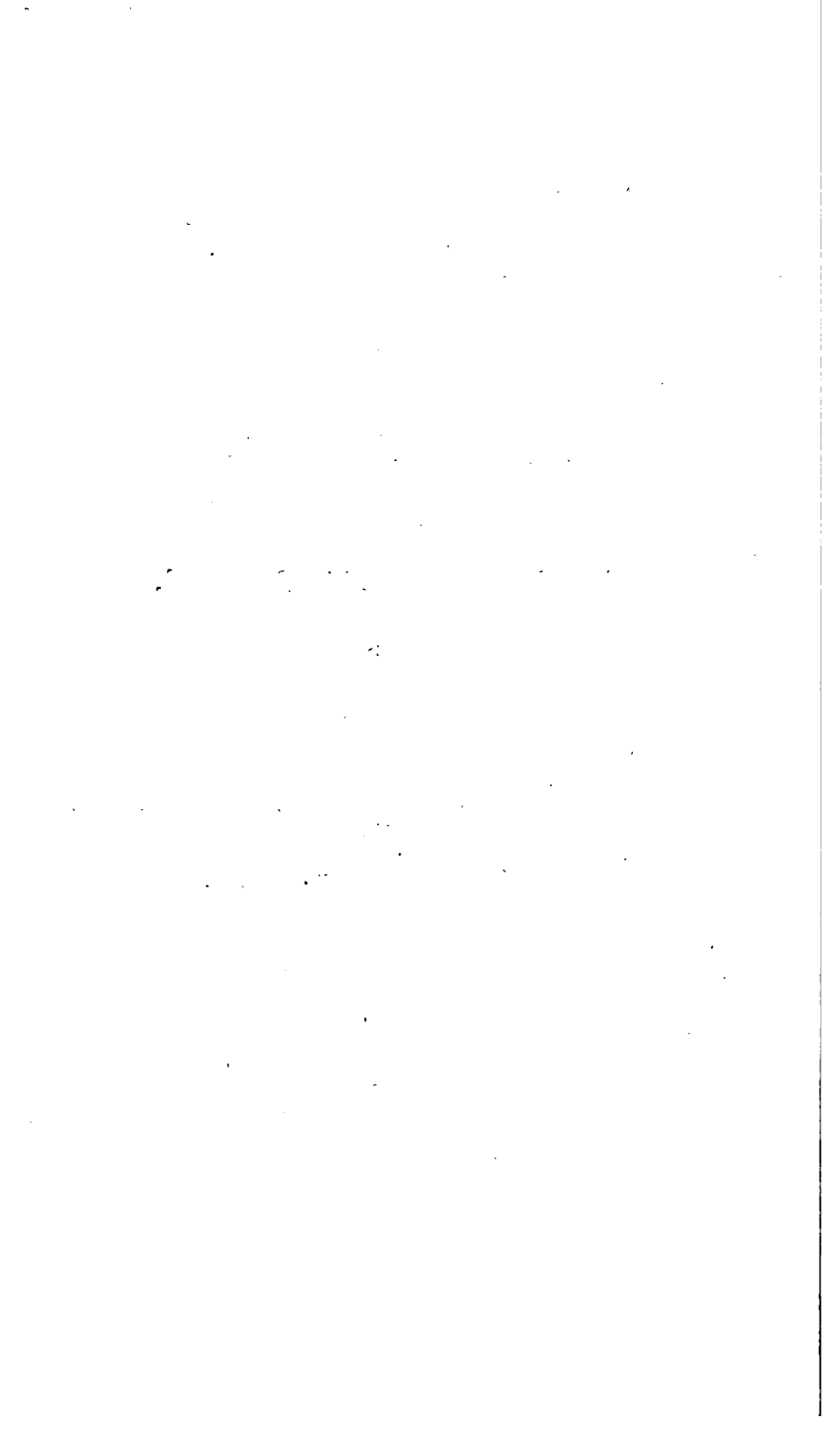
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THOSE who entertain high notions of the omnipotency of Parliament, will see no resemblance between the causes, which brought on the dissensions then, and now; and will not therefore trouble themselves with apprehensions of a similar Catastrophe; others will think, there is no difference except in this; that it was a part of the nation, which then resisted the King, because he would have taken from them their property, without their consent given by themselves or their representatives; and now, it is a part of the empire, which resists the Legislature for the very same reason. The beginnings of strife were then trifling, the end devastation and carnage, oppression of the People, ruin of the King, of the Nobility, and of the Constitution. The beginning of our present discords were trifling also, the progress is terrible, the end uncertain. This storm, which hath arisen in the Western Continent, may be compared to the Cloud, which Elijah's servant saw rising out of the sea; at first it was little, no bigger than a man's hand, it was scarce visible across the Atlantic; and those who did see it, too scornfully said in their hearts, can a drop disturb the repose of the ocean? can a speck

a speck obscure the splendour of the sun? But how hath it since thickened, and expanded itself, and darkened the face of Heaven! how doth it now hang over our heads, ready to fall down in Torrents; which will gather as they go, and when swollen with the blood of our Brethren, may become too mighty to be arrested, or diverted from their ruinous progress by any arm of flesh! May the Lord God Almighty then, whose *judgements are assuredly abroad in the Earth, by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice, who maketh men to be of one mind, and stilleth the mad tumults of the people,* vouchsafe to extend his mercy to us, to interpose, as in former times, his particular Providence in our behalf, and to influence thereby the hearts of both King and People to their mutual Interest, PEACE.



A
S E R M O N
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
ON THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF
HIS MAJESTY'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.
OCTOBER 25, 1776.



S E R M O N IV.

R O M. XIII. 3, 4.

RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO GOOD WORKS, BUT TO THE EVIL. WILT THOU THEN NOT BE AFRAID OF THE POWER? DO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, AND THOU SHALT HAVE PRAISE OF THE SAME: FOR HE IS THE MINISTER OF GOD TO THEE FOR GOOD. —

IT is related by the most antient of the profane historians*, that upon a vacancy of the throne of Persia, after the massacre of the Magi, seven of the chief nobles of the state assembled themselves together in solemn council, in order to deliberate upon the most important question,

* Herodotus.

that can possibly become the subject of human debate:—What form of government they should then establish?—One of them, strongly impressed with the idea of that equality and independence, in which the God of nature has produced us all; conscious that a distinguished rank in civil society, is not always accompanied with that superiority of understanding and integrity, which should intitle it to dispose of the property, the liberty, or the life of the meanest individual of our species; and thinking it but an equitable proceeding, that every individual should have a voice in the establishment of those civil constitutions, by which every individual was to suffer an abridgment of his natural liberty; declared in favour of a Democracy.—Another observing, probably, that an appropriation of the earth, and a consequent subordination of it's inhabitants, was coeval with the first race of mankind; and being persuaded that, in the present system of human things, the greatest part of our species must ever (either through the fatality of their birth, or the instrumentality of their vices) remain occupied in the labour of the ox, buried in the mines, or busied in

in the servile offices of life, and of course be utterly unfit for the arduous purpose of Legislation; and further remarking, that in all popular assemblies, a few men, superior to the rest in dishonesty or ingenuity, generally abused the passions of the multitude to their own ends, to the establishing tyranny on the ruin of public liberty; influenced by motives such as these, he gave his opinion for the constitution of an Aristocracy. — A third thought an absolute monarchy preferable to either of the other forms, which had been proposed. You remember the issue of their deliberation, the government of Persia remained Monarchial.

OUR ancestors have been wiser than the nobles of Persia, and have adopted the advantages, and avoided the inconveniences of the three different forms of government; they have distributed the civil authority through the bulk of the people, the body of the nobles, and a succession of monarchs, in such a way, that each order can use its discretion in forwarding or impeding the separate or combined tendencies of the other two. One of the most refined writers * of

* Tacitus.

antient Rome has remarked, that a government composed of the people, the nobles, and a succession of princes, was a system more fit for speculative men to commend, than for reasonable men to expect the establishment of; and he has further remarked, that, if such a system should ever happen to be established in the world, it would not continue long: the English history has rendered suspicious the observation of the Roman historian; for though our constitution has been shocked more than once, by the bad designs of our princes; and was once overturned by the folly of the people; yet does it still remain a mixed government, in which every order has, if not it's proper influence, yet, an influence too powerful to be trampled on by either, or by both the others, with impunity.

BUT as nothing can contribute more to the stability of a state, than a clear and comprehensive view of the relation, which subsists between the people, and those whom they have appointed for their governors; and as upon a late occasion, I took the liberty, from this place, to enlarge upon the rights of the people, and the dangers which
seemed

seemed to threaten the future ruin of the constitution; I will now crave your indulgence, whilst I explain the duties of the people, and the blessings of that government, which we do at present enjoy.

THE first duty, which subjects owe to the civil magistrate, is obedience. — The Christian Religion has been thought by some, to enjoin unlimited obedience; and to take from mankind that liberty of resistance, in extreme cases, which the very frame of our nature demands, as an inalienable right; and which the voice of reason, as well as of humanity, allows. The doctrine of non-resistance, has been principally founded upon a distorted interpretation of some few passages in the Epistles; and in particular, the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, has been pressed into the service of Tyranny, and the precept of the Apostle has been compelled to contradict his practice. In order fully to understand the weight and tendency of the Apostle's reasoning in that place, it is necessary to consider the particular circumstances of the persons, to whom he addressed his epistle.

· ABOUT six years before St. Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, the emperor Claudius had banished the Jews from that city, for raising continual tumults against the state, *impulfore Cbresto*; of this event Paul must have had circumstantial intelligence from Aquila and Priscilla, with whom he lodged at Corinth, and who had left Italy upon that very account. It is not an easy matter to say, what Suetonius meant by the expression, *impulfore Cbresto*. * Some have thought, that the enmity of the Jews against those of their own country, who had embraced Christianity, had produced some disputes and disturbances, which coming to the Emperor's knowledge, occasioned the expulsion; † others have supposed, that the historian alludes to the success, which attended the first promulgation of Christianity at Rome, and the consequent desertion of the established system of Polytheism; to me it seems most probable, that the Jews, in becoming Christians, had shewn a disposition to rebel against government, from the notion of Jesus as the anointed of God,

* Dr. Lardner's Collect. of Antient Testimonies, &c. vol. I. p. 365.

† Dr. Powell's Discourses, p. 157.

being

being the long expected Prince, who was to overcome the Romans, and to redeem Israel. Christ, indeed, was ascended into heaven; but those, who had proposed the question to him, the day he ascended, *Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* had been told, that he would so come, in like manner, as they had seen him go into heaven; and this declaration might easily be interpreted, by the prejudices of the Jews, into an expectation, sufficient to excite the jealousy of the Roman state. It was a received maxim amongst the Jews, that the Messiah would free them from the Roman yoke; this was the principle, by which many false Christs were continually exciting tumults in Judea: it was the same expectation, which induced the Jews, some fourteen years after their banishment from Rome by Claudius, to begin that rebellion, which ended in the destruction of their city and their civil polity: and it does not appear an unreasonable conjecture to suppose, that the same opinion had operated in the same manner, upon the minds of those, who acknowledged Jesus to be the true Messiah. Be this as it may, we are certain, at least,

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from

from the testimony of Josephus*, that the whole nation of the Jews had become infected with the seditious principles of Judas, the Gaulonite; who, in the reign of Augustus, had excited no inconsiderable tumult in Judea; and every where taught the people doctrines, till then unheard of amongst them, — that it was not lawful to acknowledge submission to any earthly governor, the Lord Jehovah being their only Lord, or to pay tribute to the Romans. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Christians at Rome, consisting of Jews and converted Gentiles, (who considered themselves as partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree, into which they had been grafted; as acquiring a title to all the real or fancied privileges of the common-wealth of Israel) seems to have had a particular view to the refuting the tenets, that Judas had broached, which the whole nation had embraced; and for an adherence, probably, to which, the Jews and Christians had been banished the city. He expressly informs them, that there was no civil power, but of God; that all powers were ordained of God; that rulers were

* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 1.

God's ministers; and that tribute was to be paid to them, as to the ministers of God: As if he had said, you are quite mistaken in the opinion you have entertained, that God is the author of the Jewish government only; every other civil government, if not particularly appointed, is providentially ordained by him for one common end, the benefit of human kind; if you become refractory members of civil society, raising tumults and seditions, and refusing to pay your tribute, from a persuasion of the unlawfulness of submitting to a heathen magistrate, or acknowledging a human governor, you are in a great error; for even a heathen magistrate, is the earthly minister, whom God has ordained to do you good, by being a terror to evil works; and you must not scruple to pay him your tribute also; he has a right to expect it from you, for his attending continually upon that very thing, the punishment of your vices, and the protection of your innocence.

IF we have rightly explained the occasion of writing this famous passage, we may see with what little reason some men have thence built their servile system of unlimited
obedi-

obedience. The Apostle is addressing himself to a very inconsiderable part of the inhabitants of the greatest city then in the world, and endeavouring to root out of their minds a pernicious prejudice, which struck at the foundation of all civil government; and which must in a singular degree have excited the Roman government to crush the rising sect; and his argument appears to be adapted to that particular purpose. But, though we cannot here discover, that the Apostle had any intention of laying an obligation upon the senate, and the whole people of Rome, if they should ever become Christians, to stretch out the neck, and wait with submissive expectation, till some haughty tyrant had struck it off, or till some less humane one, had riveted his chains upon it; yet we do discover clearly, and at once, the duty of a conscientious obedience to those, who are *the ministers of God to us for good.*

ST. PETER, in his Epistle to the Christians, who were dispersed through the chief provinces of Asia Minor, insists upon the same doctrine of obedience to civil magistrates, which St. Paul had pressed upon the converts

converts at Rome; he does not, indeed, derive the motive to obedience, from the same principle; for St. Paul's letter had probably put a stop to the tenets of Judas; or the Asiatic Christians might never, perhaps, have been infected with them; so that St. Peter having no occasion especially to correct such gross errors, does not speak of government, with St. Paul, as being ordained by God, but as being instituted by man, *submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.* There is no contradiction at all between the Apostles; government, though it be the institution of man, and of consequence be infinitely various, according to the tempers, and circumstances of men, in different parts of the globe; yet is it every where, and at all times, when administered for the happiness of mankind, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, to be considered as having the sanction of God's authority; and they who resist a government instituted for the ends, and executed according to the means, which both the Apostles have described, resist unquestionably the ordinance of God. Christianity, which gives a new sanction to the natural duties of imperfect obli-

obligation, and enlarges the sphere of our private virtues, enforces also civil obedience, which the law of nature points out, by new penalties; and orders us to be subject, not only for fear of civil punishment, but from a principle of religious duty; *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

THE duty next in importance to the rendering of obedience, is the rendering of honour to the civil magistrate. — Let no one suppose, that he honours his prince, when he flatters his follies, or shuts his eyes to his faults, or ministers to his vices, or misleads his councils by adulatory compliances with his passions or his prejudices. This is the kind of honour, by which bad men take possession of the hearts of weak princes, undermine the virtue of the best, insinuate themselves into places of confidence and profit, keep at a distance from the throne it's true supporters, ridicule with impudent buffoonery honest men, laugh in the presence of their prince at public virtue, and riot in the ruin of their country, or their King. This is the kind of honour, by which Charles the First unhappily lost his life, and James the Second lost his crown;

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it is the offspring of the subjects' iniquity, and it is the parent of the prince's tyranny; for there had never yet been a bad prince, but for the flagitious flattery of bad subjects. The true honouring of a prince, consists in a conduct diametrically opposite to this; in confining his established prerogative within the antient limits, in repressing too the licentious attempts of factious men to diminish it; in speaking the truth to him, with reverence, indeed, but with firmness; in running the risk of his displeasure, by warning him against measures, oppressive to the nation, and ultimately destructive to himself; in persuading him, that he can have no interest different from that of his subjects; and that the safety and the glory of his crown is best confided, not to a rotten system of corruption, but to the uninfluenced support of an enlightened, a brave, and a loyal people.

BUT besides this species of honour, which none but the more immediate servants of the crown, or the more distinguished members of the community, can have an opportunity of shewing to their prince; there is another kind of it, which extends to the
subjects

subjects in general, and which is briefly comprised in the scriptural precept, *thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

THE strength of government is principally built upon the opinion, which subjects entertain of the sovereign authority; and he, who to serve a party, or to forward his interest with an ambitious leader, endeavours by false insinuations and licentious misrepresentations, to render government odious or contemptible, is guilty of a great transgression against this duty of honour. I have said, by false insinuations and licentious misrepresentations; I cannot therefore be understood to mean such, as excited that general discontent in the nation, by which the Revolution was accomplished; but such, as were used by a numerous party amongst us, soon after the Revolution, and again upon the accession of the House of Brunswick, and which had well nigh poisoned these two sources, from which are derived our present blessings. There is no country in the world; in which men can discourse with so much safety upon public affairs, or canvass the actions of a king, or of his ministers, with so much freedom, as in our
own;

own; even in Venice, and in Holland, there is a jealousy in the ruling powers, which restrains individuals from censuring the measures of administration, and exacts a silent and implicit obedience to all its commands; our happiness in this respect, (which God forbid we should ever be deprived of,) should teach us moderation in the use of it; we should not quarrel with every arrangement, which happens to be repugnant to our particular interest, or beyond the reach of our partial comprehension.

OBEEDIENCE and honour comprehend, in their various modifications and dependences, the main duties of the people to their civil rulers; the particular degrees, in which either of them are to be exerted, cannot well be ascertained, without a reference to particular circumstances; it may be observed in general, that as on the one hand, we are under no manner of obligation, either from reason or revelation, to honour or obey a prince, to the entailing slavery upon ourselves, or our posterity; so on the other, it is our interest as sober citizens, and our duty as good Christians, to be very back-

ward in our disobedience to government, and very averse from diminishing the honour due to our rulers, by scrutinizing their measures with malignant rigour, and representing every step which we think erroneous, as originating in a settled design to subvert the constitution of our country. The alarm, indeed, cannot be too readily taken, provided it be justly taken; for the vigilance of the people has often disheartened the councils of tyranny; But we should see the iron hand of oppression up-reared against us, (I do not say, that we should wait for it's fall,) before we withdraw from our rulers, either our obedience, or our respect. We may otherwise happen to become the most pestilent members of civil society; for it is a difficult matter to determine, whose guilt is the greatest; that of the prince, who deliberately plans the subversion of his people's liberty; or that of the subject, who designedly alienates the minds of the people from their prince, by false crimination. From this general view of the duties, which subjects owe to every good government, I proceed to a short sketch of the advantages, which are derived to us from the nature of our own.

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THE greatest blessing of human life, is liberty; liberty consists, in being governed by law, made by ourselves, or by our Representatives freely chosen by ourselves; and the most certain characteristic of public liberty, is the incorrupt administration of public justice: And accordingly, we observe, that when the Stuarts began their attempts to enslave the nation, they either diverted the course of law into new and unheard of channels, or they intimidated by threats, or they seduced by promises, those who presided over the old. But no one, of how desponding a complexion soever he may be with respect to our importance as a nation, can doubt concerning the integrity and independence of our courts of law. If your personal liberty is unjustly abridged, though but for an hour, and even by those, who are nearest in authority to the throne, the law will lift up it's mighty voice in your protection; it will seize, without hesitation or dismay, your injurious aggressor; and drag him, trembling and reluctant, to the judgment of your peers. This is a blessing, not so much as heard of in despotic Governments; and it is violated in a greater or less degree, in every boasted Republic in

Europe. No one, who is duly sensible of it's worth, but must abhor every attempt, secret or open, of prince or people, to overturn that civil constitution, in which it is established; but must feel his heart beat with undissembled loyalty and truth, towards that prince, and that legislature, which have given it it's full completion.

It is hazardous, indeed, to speak, when a plain avowal of the great natural rights of a people, is falsely interpreted into a disaffection to the prince; and an anxious foresight (proceeding from a supreme attachment to the principles of the constitution) of the means, by which it may be impaired, is foolishly, as well as falsely, construed into a dislike of it; and when a just commendation of the virtues of the king, will as injuriously be ascribed to a principle of adulation: Truth, however, is above the controul of malice or misrepresentation; and would think it a profanation of this day's solemnity, if she forgot to mention, with unfeigned approbation, that substantial instance of his Majesty's regard for the rights and liberties of his subjects, which he manifested in the first year of his
reign;

reign; by a declaration from the throne, that he looked upon the independency and uprightness of the judges of the land, as essential to the impartial administration of justice; and by recommending it, to the other branches of the legislature, to concur with Him in securing the judges in the enjoyment of their offices, notwithstanding the demise of the crown; and in making their salaries as lasting as their commissions. I cannot so far trespass upon your patience, as to enlarge upon the improvements, which the administration of justice has received, during the present reign, in two other very momentous instances; one respecting the abridgement of the privileges of parliament; the other respecting the mode of determining, upon principles of impartial justice, the claims of those who aspire to the most important of all trusts,—the representation of the people.

ANOTHER blessing, which we seem not to think of with the gratitude we ought, is our religious liberty; since the accession of the House of Hanover, the excluded line has made two attempts to regain the throne; had either of them succeeded, we should

long since have had great reason to deplore the change in that, as well as in other particulars; for religious toleration, is not a more certain characteristic of the reigning family, than religious bigotry was of that, which the courage and the wisdom of our ancestors deposed. It is not from popery alone, that we want to be secured; there may be persecution, where there is no popery; our princes since the Revolution, have taken care to support the established church, in all decent dignity and authority; but at the same time, they have very humanely forbidden it, to look down with a domineering eye upon our dissenting brethren. If the dissenters are still compelled to contribute towards the maintenance of the established clergy, they should not consider that circumstance, as either *an injustice*, or a *hardship*; the rulers of the nation have thought it more conducive to the public good, to expend the public treasure, in establishing one particular mode of public worship, than in giving an equal support to all modes; and individuals may as reasonably, I apprehend, be obliged to contribute their quota for that purpose, as for any other purpose, civil or military, which they may happen

to

to think inexpedient. They have, perhaps, much greater reason to complain, that they are still compelled to assent to the doctrines of our church; the time, however, may come, when the wisdom of government will grant them full relief*; when they shall have no more occasion to say, *The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge*; when the intolerant principles of their ancestors, shall be no more remembered to their discredit; when all jealousies and animosities shall be done away; and their loyalty and zeal for the protestant succession, shall meet with a full reward, in a complete toleration; in the mean time, they will continue secured from every insult, by the increasing good will of the established church towards them; and protected from every danger, by the mild spirit of our government.

IN opposition to this, by no means exaggerated picture of our happiness, a sanguinary scene obtrudes itself upon the reluctant eye, blackens with dismal augury our future prospects, and chills with the damp of death every festive feeling: — but, for this day at least, let us turn aside from the alarming

* Relief was granted by an act of Parliament in 1779.

view; and, praying with devout sincerity to Almighty God, to confound the designs of those external and inveterate enemies, who unquestionably encourage one side, and deceive the other, to the ruin of both, let us indulge a pleasing hope, that all may yet be well; that the great chain of mutual interest, the only bond which can unite great nations, may be drawn closer and closer by a mutual sense of danger, and a mutual oblivion of what has passed.

BUT however different our sentiments may be upon this subject, I will conclude with a wish, in which, I am persuaded, I shall be joined by every member of this our Sion;—for a warm attachment to the reigning family, and a jealous regard for the liberties of our country, have long been, and we hope will long continue to be, the distinguishing characteristics of the University of Cambridge:—May the Crown then of this extensive empire, rest with ease and with undiminished lustre, upon the head of his Majesty, and of his latest posterity; whilst they continue to wear it with honour to themselves, and with advantage to the state; whilst they continue to govern a FREE PEOPLE.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

ON THE

DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL FAST,

ON

ACCOUNT OF THE AMERICAN WAR,

FEBRUARY 4, 1780.

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S E R M O N V.

p. 25.

ISAIAH ii. 4.

NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD A-
GAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY
LEARN WAR ANY MORE.

THE Roman historians have informed us, that the Temple of Janus had been shut only twice, from the foundation of the City to the reign of Augustus Cæsar. For above seven hundred years, that ambitious people had been employed, almost without intermission, in establishing their empire by the destruction of the human species. They always had a reason, or found out a pretence for war. The Annals of all other States, in every quarter of the Globe, though they are not so deeply stain-
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ed with blood as those of Rome, are sullied with sanguinary pictures of desolation and carnage, of nation lifting up sword against nation, and mutually exercising every horrid art, in order to accomplish each others subjugation or extinction.

To a speculative mind warmed by a general philanthropy, humanized by philosophy, or enlightened by Christianity, there can be but few justifiable occasions for commencing offensive war. The acquisition of food for the support of life, is one of the chief. But to this primary cause, (which the plenty God has poured upon the earth seldom suffers to take place,) the sad passions of mankind have added a thousand others. Revenge for fancied injuries has, at times, in every country reared it's relentless standard; avarice has slain it's millions; a lust of domination has deluged every region of the globe with human blood; every mean, debasing propensity of our nature, has become the occasion of exciting or extending the calamities of war.

THIS ferocity so peculiar and so disgraceful to our kind, might be subdued by the
power

power of natural reason. Were all men dispassionate and just, as reason tells them they ought to be, there would be an end of contention by force: The state of Nature is a state of Peace. But the history of the world does not authorize us to expect such a desirable event from the prevalence of reason alone. We think it may be expected, from the universal prevalence of genuine Christianity; the Messiah *will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and speak peace unto the heathen.*

THAT the general tendency of the Gospel is to extinguish the spirit of contention need not be proved; it's antient adversaries were so sensible of this, that they turned what should have been it's commendation, into a matter of reproach, and reprobated it, because it gave many precepts to avoid the commission of injuries, and injunctions to forgive them, but none to avenge them. Besides this general tendency of the Gospel to soften the hearts of mankind, to compose differences, and to stop the effusion of blood, there are some express prophecies which have a probable relation to that event. That contained in the beginning of the second chapter

chapter of Isaiah, may justly be esteemed of this sort.— *It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge amongst the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*— It is generally agreed amongst Christian Writers, that, by the last days here spoken of, we are to understand the whole period of time, from the first promulgation of the Gospel to the final coming of Christ to judge the world. The antient Jews themselves interpreted this prophecy of the times of the Messiah; and they object to us, that the Messiah cannot yet be come, because war hath not yet ceased in the world. Some, in reply, have contended, that this prophecy was fulfilled, when peace
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was established throughout the Roman Empire about the time when Christ was born. But that peace was soon broken, men had not time to beat their swords into ploughshares, before they were again plunged in war; nor was it established in consequence of the promulgation of the Gospel, of the word of the Lord which went forth from Jerusalem, but by the word of the Emperor which went forth from Rome. Others are of opinion, that the prophecy only respects the mild Spirit of Christianity; and this interpretation is so reasonable, that it may possibly be the true one; to me however it seems probable, that this prophecy will be literally accomplished at some future period, when all nations shall flow unto the mountain of the Lord, and be willing to walk in his paths; that is, when Christianity shall be universally received, rightly understood, and conscientiously practised.

WERE all the nations of the Earth converted to the Christian religion, and the individuals of those nations not nominal merely but real Christians, it would be utterly impossible for a state of war ever to have a beginning amongst them. But unhappily

happily for mankind, neither of these events is likely soon to take place. Christianity hath of old indeed fixed it's root in the world, but it hath not yet stretched out it's branches over half the Globe, nor hath it any where produced it's genuine fruits. It hath amended the lives and elevated the hopes of a few individuals, but has it fully, and virtually pervaded the hearts and councils of Princes, from whence are the Issues of Peace and War?

THE Councils of Princes are usually governed, either by the Princes themselves, or by a few individuals of their own appointment, who, being in most countries free from human animadversion and the fear of punishment, too frequently suppose themselves superior to all controul. Men of this stamp, if they do not look upon religion as a human contrivance, invented by statesmen to keep the ignorant in awe, are apt to consider it's influence as limited by the concerns of private life. The prosperity of a State, or, which with them is the same thing, the gratification of their Ambition, or any other passion, they think may be prosecuted by all possible means; in public transactions they

they acknowledge no justice, but what springs from utility, and is regulated thereby; the sanctity of treaties is despised; guaranties are broken as soon as made; and they consider him as a sorry politician indeed, who expects that any nation will adhere to it's engagements longer than whilst it is their interest not to break them. There can be no doubt that individuals, professing principles such as these are not Christians. They may be potent Princes, experienced Statesmen, able Generals; but they are not Christians. Christianity in it's regards, steps beyond the narrow bounds of national advantage in quest of universal good; it does not encourage particular patriotism in opposition to general benignity; or prompt us to love our country at the expence of our integrity; or allow us to indulge our passions to the detriment of thousands. It looks upon all the human race as children of the same father, and wishes them equal blessings: In ordering us to do good, to love as brethren, to forgive injuries, and to study peace; it quite annihilates the disposition for martial glory, and utterly debases the pomp of war.

IT is not here insinuated, that a nation of Christians is bound to give way to the depredations of an unjust Invader; that would not be doing good but harm, it would be encouraging the wicked to oppress the innocent. But, though the right of just defence be certainly allowed us upon the principles of Christianity, yet woe be to that man who puts us to the necessity of using it! who from motives of pride, ambition, interest, or resentment commences or carries on an unjust war! He may chance to meet with the favour of his Prince, be extolled by his fellow citizens, admired by surrounding nations, yet must he answer for his conduct at a Tribunal, where Princes cannot protect him, nor the praises of the people follow him, nor reasons and necessities of state, much less prejudices and passions, be urged in his defence; divested of the pride of office and the insolence of power, he must there stand a desolate unprotected individual, the tears of the Widow and the Orphan will be produced against him, the blood of thousands will cry aloud for vengeance. A future judgment is a dreadful thing to us all, the expectation of it alarms the best and appals the stoutest,
and

and had the foresight of it a proper influence on the minds of the great Ones of the earth, they would not, without extreme reluctance and the most absolute necessity, let loose the savageness of war, which preys alike on the lives and properties of the innocent as well as the guilty.

BUT that I may not appear to deal in general censure, for which there is no ground, or to have any pleasure in representing the Councils of Princes, as generally greater strangers to Christian morality than they really are; suffer me, from a sad catalogue which presents itself, to select a few recent instances, in which the obligations of Religion seem to have been swallowed up in the gulf of political or commercial interest.

WAS it the Spirit of Christianity which instigated an ambitious Sovereign to arm himself against the liberties of Corsica, and not to scruple accomplishing his design, by little less than the extirpation of it's inhabitants? — Brave and unfortunate Islanders! ye stemmed for a time the torrent of Tyranny, in hopes that some of the States of

Europe would have enabled you to repel it with success; ye shed with ardour your best blood at the shrine of freedom, overpowered at length, desponding and deserving of a better fate, ye fell; — lamented by every friend of humanity, assisted by none.

WAS it the Spirit of Christianity which combined, in an unnatural union, three of the most powerful Sovereigns in Europe, and induced them to plan and effectuate the dismemberment of Poland? May the Partition of that country be a lesson of warning to our own! May no domestic dissension pave the way for foreign invasion! Corsica as well as Poland ought to instruct us to rely, under the providence of God, upon our own Strength, rather than upon any ideal support to be derived from the attention of other States to the balance of Power in Europe. We ourselves paid no attention to it, we either had not a disposition or were not in a condition; were by some means or other prevented from standing forth the Protectors of those two devoted countries. Other nations may be in a like situation with respect to us, and a few arbitrary Princes of the continent, (who
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look upon their People as brutal property, their Kingdoms as private estates, their Ministers as stewards, and standing Armies as collectors of their rents,) may conspire together to annihilate the little remaining liberty of Europe, and yet preserve a balance of despotism amongst themselves.

Was it the Spirit of Christianity which actuated the Councils of the House of Bourbon, when, upon the most frivolous pretences that ever disgraced the ingenuity of Statesmen, she broke the bonds of peace, tarnished with an indelible stain of conscious and determined perfidy the annals of her future story, and brought on us, a main part of the Calamity which we this day deprecate? — Let her beware — the Lion of England is not yet roused, — she thinks we are divided, it may be so; but we are not divided in our disposition to punish her.

Was it the Spirit of Christianity which has prompted not African but European Princes to traffick in blood, to make a profit of the butchery of their people? Gracious God! whence is it that Man, the noblest of thy terrestrial works, can so far forget

the dignity of his nature, become so deaf to every call of humanity, as to murder those who never injured him or his country, never gave him or his country occasion of offence? It is to no purpose that you tell us, the Petty States of Germany have a right, by the constitution of the Empire, to make alliances with whom they please — We grant it. It is to no purpose that you urge the law of Nature, as authorizing every individual to assist those whom he sees oppressed by an unjust force — Be it so. But, say, do you really think, that those who are concerned in this abominable commerce of which we are speaking, do conscientiously weigh all the arguments which can be produced, by the different contending parties, in support of their respective claims? Do you really think, that in consequence of such a minute, mature, and enlightened examination, they are always determined to take their part in support of general justice, in vindication of the law of nature? If they do this, something may be said in their excuse, they will not be liable to that imputation, which even heathen morality affixed to this detested traffick,

— *Ibi fas, ubi plurima merces.*

I hope

I hope it will not be thought indecorous to have spoken thus freely concerning such practices of Sovereign Princes, as appear to be wholly repugnant to that Gospel, by which, and by which alone both they and we must look for salvation and eternal life. The hour may be at hand to some of us, cannot be far off from any, when this tremendous truth will be better understood. In the mean time it is our especial duty, as Ministers of the Gospel, to represent the rights of humanity as of more value than the arts of sovereignty, the laws of Christianity as far more sacred than the customs of civil society. We pray to God, that there may be no occasion any where for this freedom in future, that the Spirit of his Gospel may become the rule of life to Christian Governors, then will not men learn war any more, Christendom will be at peace, *they will not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain.*

BUT it is not only in the manner, in which the Governors of Independent States conduct themselves towards each other, that we deplore the defect of Christian principle; it is equally wanted in the conduct

of individuals towards the Governors themselves. There is scarcely a court or council in Europe, in which private interest has not made shipwreck of men's consciences. This is a fore evil every where, beyond the Example of former times, it is said to be a national evil amongst ourselves; and on a day such as this, when we confess a nation's Sins, want of political principle should not be overlooked. I mean not to offend any party, but, if truth can be offensive, I fear not, in speaking truth, to offend them all, — He who from apprehension or expectation, from gratitude or resentment, from any other worldly motive, speaks or acts contrary to his decided judgment, in supporting or opposing any particular System of Politics, is guilty of a great Sin, the sad consequences of which no worldly interest can compensate. It is a maxim of the law of nature, as well as of revelation, that an action ought to be forborn, concerning the moral rectitude of which we entertain even a doubt; — *he that doubteth is damned if he eat*, said the Apostle to those, who hesitated concerning the lawfulness of eating particular meats: what would he have said to those who in matters of the last importance,

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act in opposition not to a doubtful but a decided conscience? Christian Charity teaches us to hope that there are no such men; but if such a one should, perchance, be found, let him not sing a *requiem* to his conscience, by looking upon this as narrow-minded, ill-founded, bookish, monkish, cloistered Morality, — it is no such thing; it is common honesty and Christianity. Probity is an uniform principle, it cannot be put on in our private closet and put off in the Council Chamber or the Senate; and it is no inconsiderable part of probity to speak as occasion offers with boldness, and to act with firmness, according to the dictates of conscience. Did all men do this, which it is unquestionably each man's especial duty to do, and which but for some dirty prospect of interest every man would do, the world would be much better than it is. He who acts contrary to conviction as a public man, let him boast what he will of his integrity as a private man, still he is not the honest man he ought to be; — if he doubts the assertion, let him lay his hand upon his heart, it will throb with conscious shame, and tell him it is true.

THIS



THIS you will think is plain speaking; the place from which it is spoken requires plain speaking at all times; on a day especially of solemn humiliation for our sins, you would not expect to hear any lax, fashionable, temporizing principles of Morality from the Pulpit. Alas! let us speak as plainly as we can, we have no great expectation of being regarded; it is the last stage of political profligacy when men condemn in private, condemn in unequivocal terms and without a blush, the very principles which they support in public. The God of this world has got as much possession of our hearts, as if we were to live in it for ever; as if a fever could not burn us, or an east wind blight us, or a palsy shake us, or the stone torment us, or an accident destroy us, or the course of nature itself put an end to our schemes of interest or ambition. Selfishness has banished honesty; and Christianity, because it will not truckle to our passions or our interests, has lost all its hold on our consciences. Or if men still retain a few childish, nursery ideas of their religion, the licentious commerce of an abandoned age makes them ashamed to own them: They may chance to be their companions,

panions, and we hope their comforters in a day of sickness, but they are seldom admitted as counsellors in the important scenes of public life.

WANT of principle in our political conduct, when it becomes general, seldom fails to bring with it the ruin of a nation's freedom. Want of candour in our judgment of political parties, is attended with circumstances equally dangerous to a nation's safety; as it foment divisions, deters honest men from taking a part in public concerns, and confounds the distinction between true and false patriotism. There is no need why we should introduce prejudice and ill temper into our political disputes, and thereby augment the natural difficulties attending their discussion; since the very principles on which they are founded, are often so involved and questionable, that men of equal ability, integrity, and moderation, may for ever disagree in their sentiments concerning them. I will illustrate my meaning by an Instance.—What is the limit where the support of Government should end, and resistance to it should begin? — It is in this question

question taken for granted, that Government ought to be supported; no person who knows what the terms mean will deny it. It is taken also for granted, that Government may be rightly resisted; no friend to the Revolution, or to the title by which the House of Hanover sits on the Throne of these Kingdoms will deny it. I hope the King has not a subject in his dominions, who wishes to deny it. But though men agree in the previous principles relative to the duty of supporting a good, and the right of resisting a bad Government; yet, supposing all interest and prejudice out of the question, and nothing but honesty and impartiality employed in discussing it, where shall we find the rule by which all men will agree to measure the merit of any particular Government? unless you could give all men the same constitutions of body and mind, the same educations, tempers, and talents, you will in vain expect any general agreement on the subject. Since then this diversity of Judgment is a circumstance, in the nature of things, unavoidable, it seems to be repugnant alike to Christianity and common sense, to load every man with obloquy and
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and invective who is for commencing resistance to Government, a little sooner, or a little later than we think reasonable.

SOME men may be of opinion that resistance though often lawful is never expedient, that the evils attending an arbitrary Government are less than those which may probably attend the prevention of it's establishment. Others may be persuaded, that despotism is the greatest possible evil which can befall any civil Society, and that every tendency towards it, is to be sedulously watched, and strenuously opposed. God, who knows how to measure the extent of the relations in which Individuals stand to each other and to him, and to estimate the strength of the intellectual faculties, and the force of the natural propensities of each individual, is the only judge, how far any one of either side is in a wilful, criminal error. But it is unquestionably the duty, and the interest of both sides, instead of polluting their principles and provoking their opponents by calumnies and reproaches, instead of fancying that their tenets alone are accompanied with moral rectitude, wisdom, and magnanimity, to distrust their own
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opinions,

opinions, to be ready to hear those of others with good temper and a liberal disposition, to abate a little of their firmness, to make mutual concessions, and thereby to endeavour to preserve unviolated the peace of civil Society, the bond of Christian Charity unbroken.

WE believe and hope there are few who wish to see Government supported till the King of England becomes as absolute as the Princes of the Continent, the British Parliament as venal and obsequious as the Senate of Rome in the decline of the Empire. — We believe and hope there are few who wish to see Government opposed, in order that the Constitution may be changed from a Monarchical to a Republican form, or the Crown transferred from the brow of his Majesty and the House of Hanover to any other Person or Family*. — But we trust and hope there are many, who with a perfect veneration for the Person of the

* A Tory, says Hume, since the *Revolution* may be defined to be a lover of monarchy, though without abandoning liberty; and a partizan of the family of Stuart. As a Whig may be defined to be a lover of liberty, though without abandoning monarchy; and a friend to the Settlement in the Protestant Line. Ess. xi.

King,

King, the dignity of his Government, the legal rights and all the constitutional power of the crown, wish to see it's overgrown influence reduced by lawful and quiet means to it's antient size, and the several powers of the different branches of the Legislature restored to their salutary poize and constitutional equilibrium. By whatever opprobrious appellations, men of this sentiment may be stigmatized by the spirit of Party, let them be contemptuously or injuriously called Patriots, Republicans, or Traitors, still will they be considered by every impartial and disinterested person as honest men, as sincere lovers of their country, as the King's best friends.— As the King's best friends, because upon any emergency foreign or domestic, Heaven avert the occasions of them both! the Throne will find it's firmest support, not from those who are desirous of extending it's influence beyond the boundary marked out by the blood of our Ancestors, but from those who detesting alike despotism and republicanism, are zealous to establish it's power, it's splendor, and it's permanence, on the affectionate Loyalty of a free people, on the virtuous voice of an independent Parliament.

I AM

I AM far from saying that this influence of the Crown, has been industriously augmented with a view to undermine the fabric of civil liberty; it appears rather to have insensibly risen to it's present pitch from the increase of Empire and Commerce, from the augmentation of our Armies, Navies, Debts, and Revenues; but refer it's origin to what cause you please, it's existence we apprehend is certain, and it's tendency obvious. In the hands of his present Majesty it may be a blessing to his people, but who can tell whether all succeeding Monarchs will have the same disposition to do good? and we conceive it to be abhorrent from the spirit of the constitution of England, that the freedom of the people should depend upon the accidental good disposition of the Prince. It is our Duty by social compact to be loyal, it is our Right by nature to be free. When the fervility of the Roman Senate had given up to Augustus the liberties of the State, the people enjoyed under him a mild and moderate Government, but did they do the same under Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian and many other weak or wicked Princes who succeeded him. They therefore are to be held the true lovers of their
their

their Country who are unwilling to vest in the Crown, during the reign of even a good King, a power which may in future be used to ruin the nation's freedom, by corrupting it's Constitutional supporters. Let it be remembered " That Rome was once free; That France heretofore had the three estates, which were the Guardians of it's liberty; That Spain had formerly many rights and privileges, of which nothing now but the shadow remains; That Denmark and Sweden had once Constitutions, something like that of England; and that all these countries have been inflaved by their own corruptions*.

It is the infelicity of Party to transgress the bounds of Christian Charity, decency, and good sense; to ascribe to their opponents, principles which they never maintained, consequences which will never follow, and motives for action which were never thought of; to attempt poisoning the ears of Royalty, by representing the disinterested opposers of an unconstitutional influence, as secret enemies to a just and constitutional prerogative, as aiming to bind their

* Davenant's Essay on Trade, 1699. p. 265.

King in Chains, in order to exhibit Majesty, as nothing better than the instrument of an Aristocratic Tyranny; to attempt poisoning the ears of the people, by representing those who are adverse to measures, which probably in all good conscience they cannot but think inexpedient or unjust, as greedy expectants of lucrative places, as factious citizens and suspicious subjects, as giving rise to dissension and vigour to resistance. Truth however is of no Party, and surely there is truth in saying, that the Empire is brought into a calamitous situation, that she now stands tottering on the very verge of ruin, affrighted, and amazed; she stretches out her hands to the nations around her for support, and they have hitherto made a mock at her distress; she calls out for help on those whom she formerly saved from destruction, and they have hitherto refused to hear her; her Children unhappily, probably, for themselves as well as her have forsaken her; her patient Sister has at length lift up her heel against her. Unhappy Britain, how art thou fallen! from being the Queen of Isles, thou art become the derision of Nations, and those who envied thy former prosperity behold
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with malignant pleasure thy humbled state,
exulting in their hearts they say, as Tyre
said of Jerusalem, *Aba! she is broken, we
shall be replenished, now she is laid waste.*

ACCORDING to our different tempers, understandings, and views of things, we may be disposed to derive these misfortunes from different sources; but the Speaker, however warmly he may express himself on this, or any other public occasion, in support of the great unalienable rights of human nature and of the genuine constitution of his country, holds it beneath the dignity of this place, and subversive of the end of this meeting to enter into the Labyrinth of politics, by pointed crimination, or particular animadversion. He may perhaps be allowed to hazard one conjecture on the subject, especially as it can have no more respect to the present Administration, than to all those which have for a long series of years preceded it.—Has not the Policy of Great Britain, in cramping the manufactures and circumscribing the commerce of the detached parts of the Empire, in order to aggrandize and enrich the inhabitants of this Island, been founded upon a partial and

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illiberal

illiberal principle? — You may force large bodies of Men, to continue members of your civil community, by the fear of the Mischief which you may do them, if they should attempt to quit your connexion; but this is an impolitic and an unchristian Yoke of civil union, imposed by Tyrants and submitted to by none but Slaves: Or you may induce them to it by the superior equity and wisdom of your scheme of civil Government, by making it their interest to be united to you, rather than to any other community. An union which has fear for it's basis, must ever be subverted as soon as the occasion of fear can be removed; and the sooner it is removed, the more are the interests, not perhaps of particular kingdoms, but of mankind in general promoted thereby; for fear on one side is generally accompanied with oppression on the other. But an union which is cemented by interest, by a participation of equal laws, rights, and immunities, may become perpetual: It will not, at least, be broken in the day of trial. And it does not seem to be a matter of much concern to the state, whether the public coffers are supplied from the purses, and the general safety protected by the persons,

sons, of individuals situated in Great Britain, Ireland, or America*.

IRELAND has had her request, shall I call it? or demand, granted. — Call it what you will, she has had nothing but justice done her; We wish her all possible prosperity, and in her future strength foresee our security.

BLESSING from God, and Honour from the King, fall upon the head of that Man,

* I make the whole of this observation with diffidence, I either do not see the subject in it's full extent, or a deservedly admired writer of the last century, has had his judgment warped by a partial, I had almost said a pardonable attention, to the peculiar interests of Great Britain. Speaking of Ireland, he says, "Suppose a Prince bent to hurt England, should give his assent to a law there, that the Irish may transport all their wool (woollen Goods) to foreign countries; would not this, as they say, cut the Turf from under our Feet, and at one blow, in a manner, ruin all our woollen Manufactures*." We have lately seen this liberty granted to Ireland, by a British Legislature not bent to hurt England, but to do equal justice to both countries; and we hope that the consequences foreseen by this writer, such as the fall of Rents, the sinking of the value of Land, the increase of the Poor, and the diminution of our foreign trade; (p. 123.) will not follow; or, if they should, that the strength and felicity of the Empire at large will not be injured thereby.

* Davenant on Trade, p. 118.

of whatever party, of whatever country he may be, Briton or American, who can yet devise the honourable means of bringing back to their allegiance three Millions of our Trans-atlantic Brethren: Not of dragging them in chains to the foot of the Throne, that is the language of tyranny and passion, it was the language of the day of our insolence, and ought not to have been the language of any day; but of binding them to it in cords of love: Not of bringing them back upon the impolitic principle of unconditional submission, that is treating the defection of half a mighty Empire, like the insurrection of a paltry district; but of reuniting them to this Kingdom, upon the broad basis of sincere good-will, commercial interest, and constitutional freedom. It is to no purpose, or a bad one, to inflate the pride, and exasperate the resentment of either side, by an irritating retrospect of the causes which produced this breach; it is enough for us to know that the breach is made, that our enemies have widened it, that mutual moderation must close it, or that both sides will be swallowed up in it.

LORD

LORD GOD omnipotent, Ruler of Nations, hear us! Persuaded that thou *Art*, in utter self-annihilation, we adore thy inscrutable nature. Persuaded that thou art the moral Governor, as well as the Creator of the Universe, in stedfast faith we address our prayer. — Thy wisdom, O Lord, is not limited by time; it pervades eternity. Thy Goodness is not circumscribed by place; it comprehends the Universe. If for the advancement of thy Glory; the propagation of thy Son's Gospel; the promotion of the general good of Mankind; thou hast decreed that this Nation is to be humbled, this Empire divided, this War protracted, in dutiful acquiescence we kiss the rod of thy Chastisement, knowing all thy dispensations to be wise and good. — Thy judgments, O Lord, are true and righteous; interest cannot sway them; passion cannot pervert them; nor ignorance mislead them: If in thy judgment, we are engaged with our Brethren in an unrighteous cause, we should think it an impious mockery of thy Majesty to supplicate protection; we ask instruction; beseeching thee to illumine the understandings of our Rulers, with the knowledge of what is right, and to influence their hearts

that knowing they may do it.—But, if our cause be just in thy fight with all our Enemies, and it be for our iniquities that thou hast brought these evils upon us, in thy wrath we pray thee to remember mercy; Nineveh repented, and was forgiven, we repent and implore pardon.—Thou hast broken the pride of our power; we accept the punishment of our iniquity: Thou hast humbled our uncircumcised hearts, we return in fasting and prayer to thee, the God of our strength, *hear us, O Lord, from Heaven thy dwelling place, maintain our cause, hear and forgive thy PEOPLE!*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL,

JANUARY 30, 1784.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL. U.S.A.

S E R M O N VI.

PSALM LVIII. 10.

— DOUBTLESS THERE IS A GOD THAT
JUDGETH THE EARTH.

THERE have been but few men, since the beginning of the world, who have doubted concerning the Being of a God; but there have been many who have doubted concerning his Providence. That “there is a God” who made the Heavens and the Earth, all nations have been taught by Tradition, derived originally from Adam; and some individuals in every nation, scarcely excepting the most barbarous, have been able to collect the same truth from Reason. But that this God “judgeth the Earth” which he hath made, is a proposition which
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has not been so generally admitted; the Tradition concerning it has been less uniform: And Reason is distracted, in it's investigation of the subject, by the opposition of proof; or, to speak with more propriety, it is lost in the sublimity of the contemplation.

THE term Providence, in it's primary signification, simply denotes Foresight: And, if we allow the Existence of a Supreme Being who formed the Universe out of nothing, we must needs allow, that he has a perfect Foresight of every event which, at any time, takes place either in the natural or moral world. Matter can have no motion, nor spirit any energy, but what is derived from him: He cannot be ignorant of the effects which they will, either separately or conjointly, produce. A common Mechanic has knowledge of the work of his own hands; when he puts the machine, which he has made, in motion, he foresees how long it will go, and what will be the state and position of it's several parts at any particular point of time: Or if he is not perfectly able to do this, it is because he is not perfectly acquainted with all the powers of
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of the materials which he has used in it's construction; they are not of his making, and they may therefore have qualities which he does not understand, and consequently cannot regulate. But in the immense Machine of the Universe there is nothing except what God made; all the powers and properties, relations and dependencies, which created things have, they have both in kind and degree from him. Nothing therefore, it should seem, can come to pass at any time, or in any part of the Universe, which it's incomprehensible Architect did not, from the moment his Almighty *Fiat* called it into existence, clearly foresee:—"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the World."—How this Foresight, from which we cannot, perhaps, separate the idea of pre-ordination, can subsist in the Supreme Being without destroying the moral Agency of Man, is a matter beyond, probably, the reach of our faculties fully to comprehend. Some, conscious of their inability to reconcile the notion of human Agency with that of divine Foresight, have considered Men as Machines, and denied that they have any Agency at all. Others have conceded to the human Race freedom
of

of thought and action; but have denied that God can certainly foresee free, contingent actions *. Without presuming to censure either of these sects of Philosophers for the opinions which they have adopted, or charging them with forming debasing and improper conceptions of the nature of either God or Man; we may be allowed, I hope, to differ from them both; to mistrust, on this subject especially (for we have abundant reason to mistrust it on subjects infinitely less intricate,) the extent of our capacities; and to acknowledge that Foresight appertains to God, and Freedom to Man, though we cannot, in any wise, comprehend the possibility of their co-existence †. In

* Cum igitur nulla ratio, nullus sacrarum literarum locus sit, ex quo aperte colligi possit, Deum omnia quæ sunt scivisse antequam fierent, concludendum est, minime afferendum esse a nobis istam Dei præscientiam; præsertim, cum et rationes non pauca, et sacra testimonia non desint, unde eam plane negandam esse appareat. Socini Op. tom. I. p. 549.

† I own freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is Omnipotence and Omniscience in God our Maker, and I cannot have a clearer perception of any thing than that I am free; yet I cannot make Freedom in Man consistent with Omnipotence and Omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any Truths I most firmly assent to. And therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion; that if it be possible for God to make a free Agent, then Man is free, though I see not the way of it. Locke's Lett. to Molyneux.
this

this way of considering the subject, the Providence of God is implied in his very Existence as an intelligent Creator; and it imports not only an abstract Foresight of all possible events, but such a pre-disposition of causes and effects, such an adjustment of means and ends, as seems to us to exclude that contingency of human actions, with which, as expectants of positive rewards and punishments in another world, we firmly believe it to be altogether consistent.

PROVIDENCE may be considered in another manner. We may understand by it, an uniform and constant operation of God subsequent to the act of creation. Here again the meaning of the term may be illustrated by what is observable in human contrivances. In every Machine formed by human ingenuity, there is a necessity for the action of some extraneous power to put the Machine in motion: a proper construction and disposition of parts is not sufficient to effect the end: There must be a spring, or a weight, or an impulse of air or water, of some substance or other, on which the motion of the several parts of the Machine must depend. In like manner, the Machine of
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the Universe depends on it's Creator for the commencement and the conservation of the motion of it's several parts. The power by which the insensible particles of matter coalesce into sensible lumps, as well as that by which the great orbs of the Universe are reluctantly, as it were, retained in their courses, admits not an explanation from the influence of mechanical causes: The effects of both of them are different from such as mere matter and motion can produce; they must ultimately be referred to God. Vegetable and animal life, and increase, cannot be accounted for without recurring to him, as the primary cause of both. We have fruitful seasons; but we know not the cause by which the vapours are raised up from the earth, or poured down in rain from heaven; nor can the most recondite philosophy account for the germination or the maturation of a single grain. In this view of the subject, the Providence of God is something more than Foresight; it is a continued influence, an universal Agency; — “by him all things consist — and in him we live, and move, and have our Being.”

THERE

THERE is yet a third notion of Providence; implying a particular interposition of God in administering the affairs of individuals and nations, and wholly distinct from that general and incessant exertion of his power, by which he sustains the Universe in Existence. It is in this last sense that the wisdom of our Legislature considers Providence, when it ordains solemn assemblies for deprecating the vengeance, or supplicating the protection of Almighty God; and it is this sense of the word, which speculative men admit with the greatest difficulty: I speak not of bad men, for it would be to possess a zeal untempered by charity, to rank in that class every one who feels his deliberations on this important subject, disturbed by an irksome and involuntary Scepticism. Their difficulties are of two sorts; one respects the nature of God, the other the condition of Man. They think that, on the one hand, they can demonstrate the impossibility of that particular interposition we are now speaking of, from the abstract notions they have formed of the divine perfections: And they are persuaded, on the other, that experience of what happens to good and bad men, singly

or collectively considered, does in no degree invalidate, but rather confirms that deduction of their reason; and they produce the catastrophe which, as on this day, took place, as a proof in point. — I will briefly examine their mode of arguing on each head.

THEY conceive it then to be very conformable to the nature of the Supreme Being, as investigated by sober reasoning, that events, deriving their existence from his immutable will, as the primary cause of every thing, should succeed each other in a determined order; or, in the language of one of the Fathers, they hold “the Will of God to be the necessity of nature.” In this providence, or pre-disposition of all events, they acquiesce with gratitude and confidence; believing that it fully answers the ends of a constant superintendency, accompanied by occasional interposition; that confusion and chance are thereby removed out of the Universe; that all things have been, are, and will be working together for the final good of all; and that every particular thing, even what we call a miracle itself, comes to pass in it’s own proper time,
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according to a plan established by infinite goodness and wisdom before time was. Though I cannot look upon this notion of Providence to be the true one, yet is it not either destitute of sublimity, or liable to the imputation of Atheistic Fatality, or subversive of all Piety; for we may praise God for his wisdom, and we may thank him for his goodness, in having disposed every thing in the best possible way; and we may place an assured trust in him, that nothing will ever happen to us beyond or beside what he hath appointed; but praise, thanksgiving and trust, are no mean parts of piety. It may be objected to this reasoning, that it renders all supplication unprofitable, the Supreme Being inexorable, the human Race impeccable, the order of Nature immutable, and the future fates of individuals and nations irreversibile. I am sensible that the weight of these objections will not be great in the opinion of those, who either acknowledge no religion but that of nature, or who think that the doctrine of the final happiness of all mankind is not inconsistent with the principles of Christianity. To others these objections will be fully and clearly conclusive against that notion of the divine per-

fections from which they are derived. It may justly be observed by both, that this reasoning concerning the manner of God's moral government (if a moral government can on this supposition be admitted) takes for granted what it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to prove — that it is more conformable to the nature of a wise and beneficent Being, to form a system whose parts, material and spiritual, shall all be linked together in a fatal chain; than one which shall admit the contingency of human actions, and consequently seem to require, as a mean of it's perfection, the interposition of divine agency.

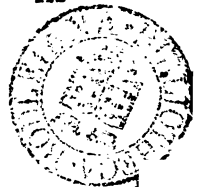
As to the argument against the interposition of God in the Government of the World, which is taken from Experience, it will strike different Men with different degrees of force, according to the extent of their observation, or the bent of their disposition. Those who are acquainted with and believe the history of the Jewish Nation as delivered in the Bible, will find no great difficulty in admitting, that what has happened to one people may have happened to another; that God may have governed the
 other

other families of the earth, if not in so visible, yet in as effectual, a manner as he hath governed that of Judah. Their minds will be filled with piety from the perusal of the sacred page: They will acknowledge the interposition of God, in what others will esteem the ordinary operation of physical or moral causes; in storms, in earthquakes; in famines, in pestilences; in foreign wars; in domestic dissensions, in peace, in prosperity, in every event tending to exalt or depress a nation. But there is a great part of mankind which has never heard of the Jewish people; and amongst us, who have heard of them, there are many who disbelieve the miraculous part of their antient history, and attribute the singularity of their present condition to the operation of their religious polity: so that no evidence of God's government of the world can be analogically collected by either of these sorts of men from the history of the Jews; and as to any direct proof of it, they will, with some shew of reason, maintain that it cannot be certainly deduced from the history of any other nation, antient or modern. Could we in truth make ourselves minutely acquainted, not merely with the civil or
K 3 military

military transactions of particular ages and countries, but with the virtues and vices, the happiness and misery, of all ages and all countries from the beginning of the world; in other words, could we obtain a distinct and complete history of the human race from the commencement of it's existence to the present time, I question not but we should discern the arm of God clearly displayed in effecting the rise, regulating the progress, and accomplishing the destruction of particular states, in strict conformity to their adherence to, or deviation from, the rule of Moral Rectitude. But the time of our existence here is so short, the means of acquiring universal historical information so impossible to be obtained, and the attention of men so occupied by other concerns, that no one can gain such a comprehensive view of the morals and fortunes of the human Species, as to remove all doubt concerning the divine Administration of human Affairs. This our utter inability to comprehend the whole of the divine Oeconomy, even in this world, should lessen, or rather should extinguish, our surprise, that "there should not in many ages be plain evidences enough either of the Wisdom or of the Justice and Good-

Goodness of God, or of so much as the interposition of divine Providence at all, to convince Mankind clearly and generally of the world's being under his immediate care and inspection and government*." But though the Evidences of the Wisdom and Justice and Goodness of God were much more numerous and plain than they appear to us to be; though the remuneration of Virtue and the punishment of Vice were much more uniform than many are disposed to admit them to be; nay, though we should grant, what few men will think reasonable, that there never hath been so much as one instance of a bad man being on the whole happy, or a good one on the whole unhappy, in this world, yet should we not be able from thence to conclude, that God governed this System by particular interpositions of his power: We should thence justly conclude, that he either governed it by such interpositions, or that he had so constituted the System when he first formed it, that all events respecting the connexion between virtue and happiness, vice and misery, should as certainly come to pass as if he was constantly exerting his Providence

* Clarke's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Rel.



in their production. But if the experience of the most perfect uniformity in the moral government of the world, could not certainly enable us to decide concerning the manner of it's being administered, whether by occasional interposition or primeval ordination, we may properly enough conclude, that no argument can be justly drawn against this interposition from the want of such experience, from the real or imagined irregularity of that Government. We see but a very little part of this Government, either with relation to it's extent or duration: It may be far more regular than it appears to us to be; there may be, which is most probable, no irregularity at all in it; but put it's irregularity to be as great as you please, still will it be impossible for you to determine, whether that irregularity proceeds from a want of God's interposition in the Government of the World, or from what you will be apt, unwisely enough, to call a defect of Power, Wisdom, or Goodness, in it's original constitution. "Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out," — our faculties are annihilated in the immensity of the divine nature; the Eyes of our Understanding are blinded by the inaccessible

cessible brightness of the Lord's Glory ; it shineth in us and around us, adorning with ineffable splendour all his works, not suffering us to doubt, for a moment, concerning either the existence or the skill of the great Architect of the Universe ; but checking our presumption, and baffling all our efforts, when we would explore the nature of his existence, or the mode of his operation.

BUT if our Reason be inadequate, as it certainly is, to the investigation of the manner in which God administers the affairs of this world, we ought, with much thankfulness, to embrace the light which Revelation affords us in so obscure an inquiry. A single page of that Gospel which is unhappily so much, if not despised, certainly overlooked amongst us, conveys to us more knowledge concerning the Attributes of God and our relation to him, than all the volumes of Philosophy which unassisted reason ever produced. But they only can be duly sensible of the value of Revelation, who have tried, with great care and attention, the strength, or rather the weakness of their faculties, in the investigation of such subjects as it teaches. The subject which we have been
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this day considering, you will readily allow, from the poor efforts which he hath made to explain it, is far above the comprehension of the Speaker; he cannot illustrate it to your satisfaction or his own: It is indeed a dark subject to understandings far more enlightened; yet open but the Bible, and it is as clear as the Mid-day Sun. You will there find Sinners exhorted to repentance, rewards promised to the righteous, punishments denounced against the wicked, and the duty of prayer enforced upon all, in a language so plain and express, as will not suffer you to doubt concerning your own Agency. You will there find God declaring, "That he maketh poor and maketh rich; that he removeth Kings and setteth up Kings; that he is the Governor among the nations; that he ruleth in the Kingdom of Men; that riches and honours and all things come of him; that of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; that he plucketh up and pulleth down, and repenteth of the Evil that he thought to do unto a nation, when that nation turneth from their evil:" Surely these modes of expression will not suffer us to believe that all sublunary Events are irreversibly fixed from the
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the Creation of the World, that our God is the God of Epicurus, exercising no superintendency over the inhabitants of the world.

I MIGHT now now pass on to apply these general observations concerning Providence to the particular occasion of this day's meeting: But I forbear; for I dare not say, as some men said, that God was on their side, when they imbrued their hands in the blood of their King, and subverted the constitution of their country, because their attempts were attended with success; nor dare I affirm, with others, that the domestic Evils which the nation suffered during the Usurpation were evident proofs of God's displeasure at the Usurpers. For what is this but in our rash and short-sighted zeal to make the supreme Governor of the Universe a partisan in our disputes, an abettor on one side or other of what is wrong? We cannot fathom the depths of God's Councils: But from all his dispensations we may learn wisdom for the conduct of Life. From the disaster which we this day deplore, Kings may learn the danger of governing contrary to Law, and even of tenaciously contending for

for all the rights of their predecessors, when the circumstances and opinions of a great nation demand from them unusual concessions: And the people, on the other hand, may learn the danger of supporting any set of Men, or even either house of Parliament, in their attempts to infringe the established prerogative of the Crown, lest in redressing the grievances incident to Monarchy, they fabricate for themselves the tenfold fetters of Republican Tyranny. In all civil commotions there are so many bad-intentioned Men on the right, and well-intentioned Men on the wrong side, that it is impossible to make a general and just estimate of the moral merit or demerit of either side. Allow me therefore, instead of ripping up wounds which have long been closed, briefly to advert to our present situation, new and critical no doubt, as a people.

HUMANLY speaking then, there is no cause for our Despondence. It is true, a mighty Empire has been dismembered; — but what is there so beneficial to Mankind in mighty Empires, as to make us regret, on principles of impartial Justice and general Humanity, the diminution of our own?

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The great Ends for which Men enter into Society are best secured in small Empires. When by conquest or colonization they become so large, that all the parts of them cannot equally participate in the benefits of civil union, it is the extreme of Folly to expect, that the parts which are oppressed should wish for the continuance of that union; and it would be the extreme of Tyranny to compel them to submit to it. The Tyranny of a Prince over his Subjects, is an intolerable Evil: But the Tyranny of an over-grown state over it's distant dependencies, is an Evil of infinitely greater magnitude. Provinces far removed from the Seat of Empire, and which have no share in it's Legislation, are not only liable to be aggrieved by the insolence, and plundered by the rapacity of petty Governors, but to have their best interests neglected, if not opposed, by the supreme Legislature itself. A Free Constitution must, from it's very nature, be limited in it's extent; whilst the chains of Slavery may reach round the Globe. The Freedom of the Roman Constitution was circumscribed almost by the Walls of their City; but the Tyranny of the Roman Empire overspread the World. America, as a
Limb

Limb connected with the British body politic might have been starved for ages, and stunted in it's growth, might have been robbed of it's proper nutriment, and kept cold and comfortless, that the heart might be kept fat and warm. But unquestionably, it is for the benefit of our Species that all such connexions should be broken; that infant States should be allowed to increase to their full maturity, and to establish their own independent Legislatures, in order that the Earth may be replenished with Inhabitants, and the blessings of Civil Liberty be equally enjoyed by all Mankind. There is natural justice and moderation in this reasoning; it suits not the despotic views of particular States, but it is calculated to promote the general happiness of the human race: And he is quite a stranger to the Bignity of the Christian Religion, and deserves not to feel the Freedom of the British Constitution, who wishes to aggrandize his own Country by bringing slavery and ruin on that of other Men.

I WISH I could consider our acquisitions in Asia as compensating our losses in America; but they have been obtained, I fear,
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by unjust force, and on that account I cannot think that they will be useful to us. It requires little political sagacity to foretell, that the natives will pay their tribute with reluctance; that it will be expended in the maintenance of the standing army by which it must be collected; that our enemies in Europe, jealous of the resources which we shall stand a chance of deriving from Asia, will endeavour to counteract all our projects of interest and ambition, and to make that country another America to this nation. Would to God that we had Wisdom and Magnanimity enough to devise safe means of restoring the territory in the East to its rightful owners, and to content ourselves with the profits freely flowing from its commerce! Then would our politics be founded in Justice; the blessing of God would be their support; and the imminent danger to the constitution, from that increase of corrupting influence which, almost unavoidably, attends an increase of Empire, and which is equally destructive of the public probity of individuals, equally subversive of the public liberty of the state, in whose hands soever it be placed, would be done away. But if this be thought a visionary project,

project, or, considering our relation to the other states of Europe, a dangerous one; (alas! that the spirit of Christianity is so little understood in Christendom as to make it seem so.) Yet there is nothing visionary, nothing dangerous, we presume, in hoping, that our Rulers, in settling the affairs of India, will pay more attention to the spiritual condition of it's inhabitants than has been hitherto done, will zealously use every lenient and Evangelical mean to effect their conversion to Christianity. Thus may the Indians, by changing their Masters, better their condition; and God, who bringeth Good out of Evil, may make the Avarice of one part of his creatures, become the occasion of eternal Salvation to another.

It is true, the value of our landed property is now much less than it was some years ago: But this has a dependence on the state of our commerce; and our commerce, though it has suffered a temporary obstruction, will soon expand itself into all it's former channels; and it will do this, because we can supply foreign markets with better goods, at a cheaper rate, and with a longer credit, than our neighbours can do:
and

and these being more just, will therefore be more sure and permanent sources of profit to us, than an arbitrary and precarious monopoly of the trade of half the globe.—The debt of the nation is confessedly great: But the property of the nation, consisting of the accumulated property of the individuals composing the nation, is, we conjecture, at least six times greater than the national debt.—The wealth of individuals has been lessened: It is to be hoped, that the dissoluteness of all ranks has thereby received a check.—We are still a great and powerful people, though fallen from that summit of greatness which is seldom productive of virtue; though despoiled of that power of doing wrong with impunity, which no individual, no nation ought ever to enjoy. I do not here inquire, whether on the Ocean we exercised that power towards the other states of Europe; but it is clear they thought we possessed it, and under the influence of that opinion it was natural for them, in the day of our distress, to combine together that we should possess it no more.—Though some things in our Civil, and some in our Ecclesiastical Constitution, may not be so perfect as to admit of no improvement;

yet, in both respects, we are an happy people, when compared with most of the other nations around us.

BUT great and happy as we are, there is much room left for those whom it may concern, to make the attempt of rendering us greater and happier; and we sincerely pray to God that all parties may be disposed to do this, not by sacrificing public confidence to private animosity; the stability of government to selfish or ambitious struggles for power; not by indulging a proud propensity to embrace the first favourable opportunity of regaining our glory, as it is called, by the renewal of war; not by prosecuting unjust views of commercial monopoly, or territorial conquest, in distant countries; but by taking the most prudent measures at home, to heal our divisions, to increase our numbers and to amend our morals; for the Strength, foreign and domestic, of every nation upon Earth, must ultimately, under God, depend on the Union, and on the Number of it's inhabitants, and it's Happiness on their VIRTUE.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. BRIDE'S, LONDON,
BEFORE THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,
On MONDAY in EASTER WEEK, 1786.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
5708 SOUTH CAMPUS DRIVE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

S E R M O N VII.

JOHN XIII. 35.

BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT
YE ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YE HAVE
LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.

THE several sects of Philosophers which subsisted in the Heathen World, were distinguished from each other by a great variety of speculative opinions, concerning the origin of things, the nature of their Gods, the Criterion of virtue, and the ultimate End of human actions. Each founder of a school was ambitious of impressing on the minds of his disciples some singular tenets, by a profession of which they might be known to be his followers. Amongst the Jews also there were, in the time of our

Saviour, different sects, which had sprung from different Heads, and which entertained opinions on the most momentous subjects quite opposite to each other, Thus we read that the *Sadducees* neither acknowledged *Angel nor Spirit*, but that the *Pharisees* confessed both*.

IN conformity to this custom of teaching men some discriminating doctrines, by which they might be known to be disciples of particular masters, our Saviour gave his followers a new commandment — *a new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another* †. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. The novelty and excellence of this commandment consisted not so much in the nature of the thing itself, as in the degree of love which Christians were to bear to each other; it was to resemble that which Christ bore to all mankind, when he emptied himself of his glory; endured the hardships of life; sustained the ignominy of a public execution and the pain of a lingering death for our sakes.

* Acts xxiii. 8.

† John xiii.

EASTER MONDAY. 167

IN thus instructing his followers in what way they were to convince all men — that they were his disciples — our Saviour does not teach them any barren *dogma*, which might be denied or admitted without affecting the happiness of mankind; he does not initiate them into any mysterious doctrine, which could not be openly professed, without loosening the bands of society, or trespassing on the decencies of private life; he does not recommend to them any *Pharisaical* singularity in their dress, or the austerity of *John's* disciples in their manner; the badge by which he wished them to be distinguished as his followers, was in no wise calculated to flatter his own ambition, or to promote his particular interest; it respected the general interests of humanity, and was, like it's divine Author who spent his life in doing good, full of goodness and compassion, — *by this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye love one to another.*

SUFFER me on this occasion to illustrate to you by a few instances, taken from public and private life, the great happiness with which human nature would be blessed, could men be persuaded to become the true disciples

ciples of Christ, could they be brought *to have love one to another as he hath loved us.*

YE Princes of the earth! who stand surrounded with innumerable hosts of Men, whom ye have prepared by the severity of military discipline to engage in any quarrel which your wild ambition may call them to; could ye be brought *to love one another*, what deluges of blood would remain unshed! War, that reproach of our Humanity; that stain of our Christian Profession; that contradiction to every principle of sound reason, every deduction of common sense; War, with all it's concomitant horrors would cease for ever. The predictions concerning the pacific times which were to attend the kingdom of the Messiah would be literally fulfilled, *the inhabitants of the holy Mountain would hurt and destroy no more**.

YE proud and persecuting Ecclesiastics! by whatever titles ye may be distinguished, to whatever sect ye may belong, who in the fury of your zeal exclude from the mercies of God, all men who cannot apprehend the doctrines of Christianity, in the same sense

* Isai. xii. 9.

in which they are understood by you, by your church, or party; who arrogate to yourselves the high prerogative of deciding all controversies, removing all difficulties, explaining all mysteries; who rashly presume to judge, and to condemn the servants of another master; could ye be brought to know what spirit ye are of, to become the true disciples of the meek, the patient, the commiserating Jesus; how would the Church of Christ, as a pattern of peace, love, and charity, allure into it's bosom every beholder; instead of frightening Jew and Gentile from it, as a monster pregnant with persecution for conscience sake.

Ye slanderers and backbiters in private life! who feed the malignity of your tempers by murdering, not the bodies, but, what is more dear to honest men, the reputations of your neighbours; who secretly whisper where ye dare not openly calumniate; who rejoice in blackening reputable actions by misrepresenting the intentions of the agent; who are studious of magnifying little failings, incident to the frailty of our natures, into unpardonable offences against Christian morality; could ye be brought to
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be disciples of Christ, to love those whom ye now love to traduce; what anxieties of mind, what ruin of domestic comfort, what jeopardy of fortune, what breaches of friendship, what unneighbourly suspicions, what bitter animosities, what deadly hatreds, in a word, what miseries and mischiefs of every sort; engendered of the poison of your lips, would not be avoided?

Ye who are puffed up with the pride of blood, with the pride of office, with the pride of learning, with the pride of wealth, or with a pride from whatever other object it may be derived, which prompts you to despise men of low degree, to set at nought your Brother in Jesus Christ, to look upon your inferiors as Beings of a different Nature, purposely created to administer to your wants; could ye be induced to wear in your hearts the badge of Christianity, to obey the new commandment, to have love one to another, how would ye by kindness and condescension lighten the burdens, and lessen the misfortunes with which the lower orders of society are oppressed! Lower orders there must be in every society of men, but in a society of Christians the highest
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and the lowest are, in certain respects, brought upon a level; the benignity of the Gospel annihilates, as it were, the harsh distinctions of civil life. There are a great many evils, it must be confessed, which cannot be avoided; famine, and pestilence, and inclement seasons, and untoward accidents, are big with calamities to which all men are exposed: We none of us can escape pain, and sickness, and death; but these unavoidable evils may be much mitigated by the kindness of those about us, and they are not to be compared for number to those which men bring upon each other, by yielding to their pride, revenge, malice, lust, avarice, in general to the turbulency of their domineering passions, instead of listening to that sweet precept of the law, which bids them—*love their neighbours as themselves.*

THE Church of Christ, which was collected, in the first ages, by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, from among the Jews and Gentiles of different countries, greatly excelled every Church which now subsists in Christendom in many particulars. It was more pure in its doctrine; more simple in its worship; more rooted

rooted in it's faith; more fervent in it's piety; but there is no particular in which the first Christians were more distinguished from the Christians of modern times, than in the superior kindness and affection with which they treated each other. This was the characteristic of the Christian sect, by this all men knew that they were the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Their Heathen neighbours, who observed their conduct, and were astonished at modes of behaviour so opposite to their own, used commonly to exclaim—See how these Christians love one another.

THE condition of the inferior ranks was very deplorable both in Greece and Rome; the rich and powerful treated their slaves and dependents with great inhumanity; they had no fellow feeling for their sufferings, and esteemed their lives of little value. The Philosophers, indeed, occasionally exhorted their countrymen—to live with their inferiors and dependents as with unfortunate friends;—but this dictate of humanity was little regarded by those to whom it was addressed. It is not much therefore to be admired, that the courtesy, and condescension,

tion, and benevolence with which men of the greatest fortunes amongst the Christians treated their poor brethren, should have excited the surprize of the Heathens: They, who bought and sold their slaves in the public markets, and considered them as beasts of burden, could not well relish the manner in which *St. Paul* exhorted *Philemon* to receive his repentant slave *Onesimus*; (would to God that we had no Christians in our days, to whom this exhortation of *St. Paul* concerning the treatment even of offending slaves might be of use!) *receive him, says he, not now as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved in the Lord* *.

THIS kind and compassionate temper by which the primitive Christians were so eminently distinguished, both from the Jews and Gentiles, though it hath now lost some of it's lustre, yet is it still the shining light, which adorns the professors of the religion of *Christ* above those of any other religion in the world; it is still the mark by which all men may know, that we belong to *Christ* as our Head. Examine the annals of all the Heathen nations of antiquity; peruse the

* *Phil. xvi.*

modern accounts of Africa, India, China, and all the other parts of the globe where Christianity is not received, and you will in vain look for such monuments of mercy, such fruits of Christian Charity as may be met with in every part of Christendom. Nor has Great Britain been inferior to any portion of the Christian world, in displaying to the observation of mankind this great mark of the Christian Profession, — Charity. It would ill suit either the holiness of this place, or the solemnity of this occasion, or the disposition of the speaker, to descend to the use of praise bordering on adulation; yet it must be owned, for the confession is founded in truth, that this Great City, which is equal to any in the world, for it's industry, it's commerce, and it's wealth, is superior to every other in the munificent application of a portion of it's riches to works of mercy. That in this commendation I go not beyond the reality of things ye yourselves will be convinced, if ye will lend your attention to what will now be read to you.

Here the Report was read.

THE

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THE report which you have now heard, is of a nature which ought to make a lasting and a pleasing impression on our minds. It is not a report of the vanity of rich individuals, by which they strive to outdo each other in folly, and to raise the curiosity of a silly and profane world; nor of the tricks of cunning men by which they defraud; nor of the assaults of daring men by which they despoil their neighbours; it tells you nothing of the arts by which ambitious men raise themselves, and supplant their rivals; it is silent as to the importance of political parties, and all the mighty matters which fascinate the world, by a false shew of magnificence and worth. It speaks only of such things as are not noticed, or if noticed are despised by men occupied in the din and tumult, in the pomp and pleasure of life — of poor children who have been instructed in the Christian religion and brought up to habits of virtue and sobriety — of thousands of maimed and diseased wretches who have been healed — of many miserable outcasts of society who have been relieved — of persons disordered in mind who have been cured. And who is there amongst the rich, who amongst the mighty,
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who amongst those who baffle, and look big upon the stage of life, that bend their attention to subjects in their opinion so despicable and low; in reality, so worthy of the regard of the best of men. Ye have heard of the laurels which adorned the brows of *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, and *Cæsar*, and of the other renowned warriors of antient and modern times: Ye have read of statesmen who have stepped beyond the line of moral rectitude, in planning schemes to aggrandize an empire; but whose glory, think ye, was really the greatest? whose conduct, think ye, will be most acceptable to the Creator of the Universe, whose principal attribute is goodness?—that of warriors and statesmen, who sacrifice millions of their fellow men on the altars of their revenge, their interest and ambition, or that of those mild and peaceful servants of Jesus Christ, who founded and supported the charitable institutions of which ye have now heard the report? The dead listen not to our commendations, or I would expatiate in their praise; their memory is blessed upon earth, and their reward, we trust, is with God. It remains for me to exhort you to an imitation of their virtues.

IN

IN doing this, I may in the first place apply myself to your humanity, putting you in mind of the common bond by which every Individual is connected with all around him; it is a bond of sympathy, by which the God of nature has united the high with the low, the prosperous with the unfortunate. Though ye may be invested with power, possessed of wealth, and surrounded by pleasurable objects, yet ye cannot but participate with the unfortunate in his despondency, with the indigent in his penury; with the sick in all the painful calamities incident to disease. For we must be destitute of common sense if we have never reflected on the vicissitudes of all human conditions; if we have never considered that we also are obnoxious to misfortune; to poverty, sickness, and pain. We cannot divest ourselves of the feelings of humanity, we cannot view scenes of distress without wishing to relieve them; we may possibly be so engaged in business, or drowned in pleasure, as to possess little leisure to contemplate, as to be actuated by no determined purpose to alleviate the miseries of other men; but still our heart smites us and reproaches us for our neglect; it's reproaches

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are the warnings of heaven, the calls of God himself, by which he invites us to render this imperfect nature of ours, more and more resembling, in tenderness and compassion, the ineffable benignity of his own.

It is in this principle of shewing mercy to our fellow creatures, that we are most capable of imitating the most amiable attribute of the divine nature; and it is in this that God principally requires us to exercise ourselves, and he requires it of us both for our own sakes, and for that of others. It is certainly agreeable to him, who hath shed abroad his goodness through the whole creation, that we should endeavour to do good to others; for in doing this we work together with him, we second and support, as it were, his general design. But it is not solely for the sake of others that God requires us to be kindly affected towards our brethren, he requires it from us on our own account. This you may be apt to wonder at, you may not instantly apprehend how your feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked, or visiting the sick, can be a benefit to yourselves. But the case is this, God has given us an imperfect nature, which it is
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our duty to cultivate and improve; he designs us for the enjoyment of heaven, but he expects that we endeavour to render ourselves capable of becoming partakers of the happiness for which he designs us: Now heaven will be inhabited by none but by those, who resemble God himself, in *being merciful even as he is merciful.*

By frequent acts of beneficence; by perseverance in well-doing, we shall generate in ourselves a benevolent temper; and when we have attained such a temper, we have acquired that with which we may, and without which we cannot, become heirs of God's promises and denizens of heaven. So that the forming in ourselves an habit of doing good, a sympathy for other men's misfortunes, is a point of infinite importance to us; we cannot, in the nature of things, enter into the Kingdom of Christ without it. I wish that ye would suffer your minds to dwell upon this point with great attention: Ye are employed perhaps in the pursuit of knowledge, and have gained some reputation for learning; or ye are engaged, it may be, in business, and have a fair prospect of succeeding in the acquisition of

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wealth;

wealth; ye pay your debts with punctuality, and are above the practice of circumvention and fraud in your dealings; in short, your character is fair, your conscience clear, and your circumstances good — all this is well — but still it may be that ye lack something, without which all this that ye possess will be as nothing; it may be, that ye lack that commiserating disposition, that humanity of temper, that Christian charity of soul, without which it will be morally impossible for you to enjoy the pleasures which God designed you for. It is of much greater concernment to us to render our tempers peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and goodness, than to increase our learning or fame, our power and wealth and consequence in the world. A man may be very learned and have a hard heart, very famous for qualifications of no real worth; he may have great power without a disposition to do good with it; great wealth, and no liberality; great consequence in this world, and little chance of distinction in the next. If therefore we mean to be candidates for happiness in the life to come, our main study in this must be, to fit our minds for the reception of it, by cultivating the virtues of charity
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and brotherly love; we must put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy and kindness*.

I MAY in the second place endeavour to excite you to patronize the Institutions we are now commemorating, by reminding you as citizens, of the good resulting therefrom to the community of which you are distinguished members. If we turn over the page of history, from the earliest ages of the world to the present time, we shall find that the strength and prosperity of every nation under heaven, have been intimately connected with the virtue of its inhabitants; and that virtue is best produced, and best protected when produced, by the proper education of young persons of both sexes. I need not enlarge on this head, the observation is not liable to contradiction. And as to our hospitals for the sick they are universally useful, not only in relieving individuals from maladies loathsome and excruciating, but in stopping the progress of diseases, in restoring to life, and health, and vigour of mind and body, thousands of persons whose labour would have, otherwise,

* Col. iii. 12.



been lost to the state. So that every one who by his money, his advice, or his authority, contributes to the maintenance and proper administration of these institutions, may look upon himself as performing, not only a duty of humanity which belongs to him as a man placed amongst men; but a duty of Society, which belongs to him as a member of a civil community.

THERE is no question but that arguments drawn from these grounds, will have their weight with men of sense and humanity; but I will not insist on them, that I may call your minds to an argument which affects you not merely as men or as Citizens, but as Christians; which comes home to every man's conscience; which cannot fail of arresting the notice of the most inconsiderate of my hearers, and of sinking deep into the heart of the most obdurate. The argument is not of my making, and it may therefore be worthy of your regard; it is not of human composition, and it does therefore demand your attention. I trust that ye all of you remember the book from whence it is taken, it is thus expressed—*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with*

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with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World; for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick and in prison and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. Now mark, I pray you, what follows—Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, for I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye

*gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: naked and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an-hungred, or a-thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.** — If there is any one person in this assembly, old or young, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, who can bear and reflect on the passage which I have now read to him, without having his mind troubled by dreadful apprehensions for his future condition; he is either a very good man indeed, one who has never seen an hungry person whom he has not fed, a naked one whom he has not clothed, a sick one whom he has not visited, a distressed one whom he has not relieved; or he is stupidly insensible of his Soul's danger, so busied in the momentary concerns of this short life, as to be utterly inattentive to the everlasting interests of another.

* Matt. xxv. 31.

I HAVE

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I HAVE no wish to warm your minds with a transient glow of piety and goodness; but I have an earnest wish to persuade you, *by the terrors of the Lord*, to look into yourselves; to examine your moral condition; to consider the precipice on which you are standing, and by works of mercy to provide against your falling into everlasting perdition. Everlasting life and everlasting death are set before us all, it is not the saying Lord, Lord, that will save any of us; but it is the doing the things which the Lord hath commanded: Go on then, my Brethren, in supporting and bringing to perfection, the good works which your ancestors have begun; look forward to the end of your calling; take especial heed, that you be not so entangled with the cares; so bewitched with the pleasures; so bloated by the vanities of this life; as to neglect the only circumstance which is of real value in it — *the opportunity it affords you of preparing for another.*

1911

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the general situation and the second with the progress of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the results of the work and the second with the results of the work.

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4. The fourth part of the report deals with the general remarks and conclusions. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the general remarks and the second with the conclusions.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the appendix. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the appendix and the second with the appendix.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the index. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the index and the second with the index.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the bibliography. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the bibliography and the second with the bibliography.

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REVEREND BRETHREN,

HAVING never been possessed of any Ecclesiastical Preferment, by which it became necessary for me to attend either an Episcopal, or Archidiaconal Visitation, it is very probable that I may be guilty of several informalities and mistakes in conducting the business of this day. I can have no hesitation, however, in asking, and no doubt indeed of obtaining from your candour, an excuse for every thing of that sort.

BEING willing to tread in the steps of my Predecessors; and understanding, that it has been customary for them to address the Clergy at their primary visitation, I shall also venture to trouble you with a few Observa-

servations at this time, not meaning for the future to trespass often upon your patience in this way, nor yet precluding myself by this declaration, from doing it, whenever I shall judge it to be a proper occasion;

Most of you, as well as myself, have been educated in this University; and feel; no doubt, a warm attachment to the interests, and a filial reverence for the honour of our common *Alma Mater*. You will therefore suffer me, I hope, instead of attempting to instruct men older and wiser than myself in the nature and duties of the ministerial function, to step a little perhaps out of the ordinary road, whilst I explain to you my Ideas on a subject of some importance to the honour of the University; and probably of some efficacy towards the support of Christianity. Many of you, I fear, will look upon the project as too vast and visionary; to be attended with success; but knowing, that the most complicated machines are put in motion upon the simplest principles; and not being of a disposition to call out, *there is a lion in the way*; as an excuse for sitting still, I will lay before you without further preface, a few thoughts

thoughts on the Encouragement of Oriental Literature.

IT is not unknown to you, that from the fourth to the fourteenth century, there were few in Europe who understood any of the Oriental languages. Jerome in the fourth century was excellently skilled in them, and zealous in exhorting others to a similar proficiency; but from his time, to the Pontificate of Clement the Fifth, the Hebrew and Arabic tongues seem to have been no where cultivated with success. In the Council holden at Vienne in 1312, it was decreed, that Schools for teaching the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic languages should be erected in the Universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Salamanca, and in some other places. Near two hundred years after the holding of this Council, John Picus prince of Mirandula, and John Rheuclin, are reckoned amongst the first restorers of oriental literature in Italy and Germany; whence it is probable, that the establishments of Clement had failed, in some degree, of the end proposed.

IN the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the oriental languages were studied with

with as great sedulity, as the Greek and Latin. Pagninus and Vatablus in France; Galatinus and Arias Montanus in Spain; Felix Pratensis, and Elias Levita in Italy; Munster and Avenarius in Germany; in Holland, Erpenius and Golius; in England, Pocock, Walton and Castell, with innumerable others in different countries, were not only very assiduous in the cultivation of the eastern languages, but have also furnished by their works great assistance to those, who shall be disposed to follow them in the same pursuit.

THE taste for experimental philosophy, which was introduced into our own, and other countries towards the end of the last century, has given a great turn to the studies of men in every part of Europe. The book of nature is written in an universal language: It may be read, to a greater or less extent by every one. Men moreover are not anticipated in their philosophical researches by the labours of their predecessors; for every particular subject of natural philosophy is capable of indefinite improvement; and it's general object is as extensive, as the nature of things. This delightful investigation of natural phænomena;
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and their causes, has, it is apprehended, much diverted the attention of most universities in this quarter of the world from the study of language. The translations also which have been made of the best Greek and Roman Writers, have contributed not a little, to the damping of men's ardour in the pursuit of what is called classical knowledge; But however it may be accounted for, the fact, I believe, is certain, that the dead languages are much less generally understood at present, in every part of Europe, than they were 150 years ago; and they will probably become less and less so every day.

But it is no part of my design, to enter into the reasons for or against the revival of Grecian, or Roman literature; let us but once have as good translations of all the oriental books, which are now consuming in the libraries of Europe, as we have of those which are written in the Greek and Latin tongues, and a great part of my wish will be accomplished. Why should the fine talents of those, who have a turn for languages, be for ever confined to the making a few meagre additions to the learned labours of such as have gone before them, in

publishing or commenting on the works of Greek and Roman authors, whilst the extensive field of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese literature remains unknown or unexplored?

It may be objected, that, if we may judge of the worth of the unpublished parts of oriental learning from that of the works which have been already translated, we have no great reason to lament our want of information on the subject. Who would give himself the trouble to read the philosophy of Aristotle, as illustrated by an Arab? Who would form his historical creed from the tales of Persia? Who would employ his time in finding out the morality contained in Oriental proverbs, or think of soothing the anxieties incident to human life by perusing Arabian poetry? Objections, such as these, have no force. We yet know nothing, or next to nothing, of the treasures of eastern learning; but, from what we do know, there is no reason why we should be deterred from endeavouring to know more. Proverbs and Poems have their graces and their uses: But from eastern learning we derive more substantial benefits, than what can be expected from such compositions.

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We owe Algebra intirely to the Indians, or Arabians: Chemistry, Medicine, Natural History, Geography, and many of the most abstract Sciences are indebted to the Arabians, if not for their birth, at least for their support and protection, when they were abandoned by all the states of Europe. It is said, that the Arabians translated into their own language the most celebrated works of all other nations. If this be a fact, and the learned admit it as such, have we not great reason to believe, that many monuments of Roman, Grecian, Egyptian, and Chaldean literature, may be preserved in the Arabic translations, though the originals are irrecóverably lost? No language, not even the Grecian, after the conquests of Alexander, had ever so extensive a spread as the Arabic after the victories of Mahomet. — But I forbear to enlarge on a subject well known to you all; nor will I remind you of the utility of oriental learning in the interpretation of Scripture; it being acknowledged, that the best commentators either of antient or modern times, from St. Jerome to the present Bishop of London, are those, who have been the most conversant with Hebrew, and the other sister tongues.

It is a work, worthy of the attention of all the Universities in Europe, to undertake the translation of the oriental manuscripts which we are at present possessed of. We have hundreds of volumes in our English libraries; France, Holland, Italy have many; and the library of the Escurial alone, if we may judge from the catalogues which have been lately published, would amply reward all our pains. Men skilled in these languages should be invited from every quarter, formed into a kind of society, and employed for life, under the direction of proper persons, in the drudgery of translation. Nothing worth notice in this way, can be expected from the detached labours of a few Professors of Hebrew or Arabic; men of liberal education cannot readily be brought to undertake such a task, and if they could, the matter may be effected at a much easier expence by the labours of inferior persons. What would be an adequate reward for three or four needy Turks or Persians, would not be a proper stipend for one man of letters, who should be obliged annually to produce the fruits of his unremitting diligence. But without entering into the particular manner of accomplishing this design,

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I cannot help being of opinion, *that an institution established at Cambridge, for the express purpose of translating and publishing Oriental Manuscripts, would redound to the credit of the University, and tend to put the learned world in possession of a very valuable part of literature, of which at present we have but a very imperfect knowledge. There is no reason to be alarmed at the difficulty of this undertaking, when we consider, what the great Industry of Doctor Kennicot has effected in collating the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament; for if the ability of one man can do so much, what might not be expected from the joint abilities of a society of men united into a body, for the accomplishing of one single object?*

BUT an establishment at home, for the purpose of translating such Oriental manuscripts as are already to be met with in Europe, is but a part of the plan; men should be sent abroad into Persia, India, China, into every country of the Globe where there are Manuscripts of any Antiquity, in order to collect them; for it is a mortifying reflection, that we know very little of the history of the human race;

especially when there is a probability, that we might know more. The mouldering hand of time has, indeed, defaced some of the most precious monuments of antiquity; and those few which might have escaped the natural vicissitudes of human things, have been utterly destroyed by the desolation of unnatural war. The pestilent ambition of a few bad men, has left us in a state of irremediable ignorance, I fear, concerning the mutual dependencies of different nations, the primeval population of the globe, and the intellectual improvement of the human race. Yet, much remains to be done. Europe is but lately emerged from a long Barbarism; and there may be countries in Asia, which have never experienced any interruption in the progress of arts, or the cultivation of learning.

ACCORDING to the Mosaic account, the whole earth has been peopled from that small remnant of mankind, which escaped the universal deluge. But whether we suppose the several migrations to have taken place from the confines of Mount Ararat in Armenia, where the Ark rested; or the plains of Shinar, where Babel was built; still

still it is probable, that as many colonies would go Eastward, as Westward, in search of settlements. This, I say, seems very probable; yet all the antient histories, which we are acquainted with, respect the transactions of the human species, to the westward of Armenia and Shinar. By casting an eye on a globe, or a map of the world, we shall be convinced of the truth of this observation. Of the Medes, Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Arabians, Greeks, Romans, and other Western nations, we have accounts more or less full and authentic; but concerning the various colonies which, in process of time, after the Deluge, traversed the plains of Asia from the Indus to the Ganges, from the Ganges to the extremity of China, Tartary, and Japan, profane history is wholly silent; or speaks with extreme diffidence and uncertainty. There can no possible reason, I think, be assigned why the descendants of Noah should have all gone in one direction; for the part of the globe to the east of the settlement of Noah and his family after the flood, was peopled in all likelihood as soon as that to the west. Arts and Sciences have been as successfully cultivated, and the contests for

power may have been as sharp; and may have produced as many great Monarchies amongst the inhabitants of the eastern portion of the globe, as we know they did in the western.

————— *Medus ademit*

*Affyrio, Medoque tulit moderamina Perses.
Subjecit Persen Macedo: cessurus et ipse
Romanis.* —————

These lines of Claudian contain a compendium of all the antient history, which the Greeks and Romans, and we, through them have had any account of; but we have good reason to believe, that could the synchronous histories of Indostan, Thibet, Siam, and China be obtained, they would be well worthy of our attention. For if a skill in manufactures be a sign of civilization, we know from various authorities, that the Indians and Chinese were as much superior to the most antient nations of the western world, in the Arts of dying, japanning, weaving of silk, and linen, and other trades, as they are at present to us. “ And if we may be allowed to draw any conclusions from the immense buildings now existing, and from the little of the inscriptions, which can be inter-

interpreted on several of the Choultrys and Pagodas, I think it may safely be pronounced, that no part of the world has more marks of antiquity for Arts, Sciences, and Civilization, than the Peninsula of India from the Ganges to Cape Comorin *."

STRABO observes, that few of the merchants in his time, who, by sailing up the Nile and the Arabian Gulf, went into India, ever penetrated as far as the Ganges; and that those who did reach it were unlearned, and little fitted for writing the history of a country. He might perhaps as justly have said, that the views of merchants in all ages and countries center in the same point, the acquisition of wealth; and this not being generally to be obtained without much trouble, anxiety, and risk, it ought not perhaps to be expected of them, that they should employ either their industry, or their fortune in clearing up, for the satisfaction of Philosophers, points of no great consequence to their commerce. The zeal with which European merchants have endeavoured to extend their traffic, and European missionaries to propagate their religion, has

* *Philos. Trans.* 1772. p. 354.

for the last two or three centuries brought us in a small degree acquainted with the East; but it is still, in a great measure, a *terra incognita*, with respect to it's natural and civil history. And the means indeed of future information must be utterly destroyed, if other religious missionaries resemble such as lately were met with in the province of Nepal, who made it their boast, that they had burnt three thousand manuscripts. A loss this much to be regretted! since there are many manuscripts to be found amongst the inhabitants of Nepal, which treat of the history of India, going back above three thousand years; they are said to be written in the Nagri language, which is thought to be the original language of India, and older than the Shanscritta*. The ingenious Account, which has been published of the Kingdom of Thibet †, is far from satisfying our curiosity; it serves rather to excite our warmest wishes, that proper persons might be sent into that country, and every other part of the east, for the purpose of investigating the antient and modern history of the nations, which inhabit so considerable a part of the globe.

* Philof. Transf. 1770. p. 441.

† Ibid. 1776. p. 465.

To men whose minds are chained to the earth by the sordid pursuits of Wealth, or the empty ones of Ambition; who are debilitated by sensual pleasure, or rendered torpid to every arduous exertion by habitual inactivity; who, unconscious of it's importance, fritter away this short period of existence in a frivolous attention to trivial concerns; in a slavish subserviency to the uniform prejudices of the age or country, in which they happen to be born; to men of this complexion every attempt to investigate the nature of this earth or the history of it's inhabitants will appear a chimerical undertaking, originating in idle speculation, and terminating in useless conjecture. But notwithstanding the indifference which many men feel respecting every intellectual accomplishment, which happens not to fall in with their particular mode of study, or apprehension, I doubt not, but there are many of a contrary turn, who would zealously sacrifice their health, riches, and repose in support of any liberal and enlarged plan, which might be concerted for bringing us acquainted with the general history of our species.

We have been accustomed from our infancy, to consider the histories which have been transmitted down to us from the Greeks, as being the undoubted records of real transactions; yet a Gentleman well skilled in the oriental languages, has lately informed us, that in the Persian histories, which treat of the same period of time with the Grecian, there is not a "vestige to be discovered of the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, Plataea, or Mycale; no mention of the great Cyrus, nor of any king of Persia, who, in the events of his reign, can apparently be forced into a similitude:" In short, from every research which he has had an opportunity of making, he is of opinion, that there is nearly as much resemblance between the annals of England and Japan, as between the European and Asiatic relations of the same empire during the same period*.—It is an easy matter to accuse this author of great credulity; to ridicule his researches into oriental literature, and hastily to condemn in the gross all Persian historians as mere Romancers, when put in competition with the venerable writers of antient Greece; but

* Richardson's Differ. on the Languages, &c. of Eastern Nations. an

an impartial inquirer after truth will wish the matter to be thoroughly sifted; he will suspend his judgment, till he has examined both sides of the question, by the rules of sound criticism; and, for this end, he will be desirous of seeing good translations of the principal Persian books, that the learned world in general may be in a situation to weigh their merits.

THE writings of Moses have hitherto been considered as the oldest in the world; but, in the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, we are told of a curious history of India composed four thousand years ago, and from thence tracing mankind upwards through several millions of years. This, and all the rest that is delivered concerning the great antiquity of the annals of India, you and I may probably be disposed to consider as a mere fable; but there are many, neither profligate in their manners, nor destitute of talents, who have not the same veneration for the writings of Moses, that we have; and they may consider the Indian annals delivered down by the antient Bramins, to be as authentic, as those of the Bible; at least they will be perplexed with an uneasy

Scep-



Scepticism, from which nothing but a further examination into the Indian writings can free them. God forbid, that the search of truth should be discouraged for fear of it's consequences! the consequences of truth may be subversive of systems of superstition; but they never can be injurious to the rights, or well founded expectations of the human race. We believe the Scriptures, and our hopes of eternal life are built on their truth; but we trust, that no faith can be acceptable to God, which is not grounded on reason; and as reasonable beings we wish not to entertain any hopes, the foundations of which can be shaken by the most rigid inquiry into the history of mankind.

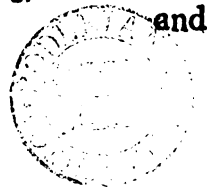
BUT the antiquity of the Indian annals is not the only circumstance which seems to militate against the Mosaic history; we are told, that the Gentoo scriptures make no mention of the deluge; and that the Bramins affirm, that the Deluge never took place in Indostan*. Now, I look upon the deluge to be a circumstance of such a singular nature, that, supposing it to have happened, the memory of it could never

* Code of Gentoo Laws, Pref. p. 38.

have

have been extinguished amongst the generality of the nations, which inhabit the earth. It is not, according to the most received chronology, much above four thousand years since that great event took place; and if any individual had the means of tracing back his pedigree through less, perhaps, than 140 generations, he would find either Shem, or Ham, or Japhet to have been his great progenitor. It is very possible for a tradition, which has passed through so many hands, to have been much altered; yet the tradition of so signal a calamity, as the destruction of the human race by a deluge, could not, I conceive, have been wholly lost, except perhaps amongst a few nations utterly buried in Barbarism. And, in fact, learned men * have abundantly proved, that a tradition concerning a deluge has prevailed in every quarter of the globe; not only amongst the Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Scythians; but amongst the Iroquois, Mexicans, Brasilians, Peruvians and other nations of America;

* The curious reader will find a good collection of the principal Heathen Accounts of the Flood, in Catcott's *Treatise on the Deluge*, p. 98. See also Grotius de Verita. C. Rel.; and, above all, the most learned and ingenious Work of the present century, Bryant's *Mythology*.



and I have been informed by one of the navigators to the Southern Hemisphere, that the inhabitants of Otaheita being asked concerning their origin, simply answered, that their supreme God a long time ago, being angry, dragged the earth through the sea, and their Island being broken off was preserved. Now if a tradition concerning a deluge has prevailed in almost every part of the globe, except in India and China, (for some add China likewise) may it not be a reason for us to hesitate a little, till we know more of those countries, before we positively affirm, that they have no such tradition, especially when there is a diversity of testimony upon the subject? For it deserves to be remarked, that what is said in the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, relative to the want of a tradition concerning a deluge in the Gentoo Shasters (or Scriptures) is contradicted by an author, who lived in India, and wrote his Account of the Sect of the Banians about 150 years ago; for he expressly says, that he made his collections, by the help of interpreters, from the Shaster; and he has the following words: — “as if the world needed cleansing of his defilement and pollution, there came a flood

a flood, that covered all nations in the depths — and so concluded the first age of the world according to the tradition of the Banians *.” As to China, there are also different accounts; some affirming, that the Chinese have a tradition concerning the deluge †; others denying that they have any ‡; but, as many are of opinion, that the certainty of the Chinese annals cannot be carried up to a period antecedent to the deluge §, have we not great reason to expect, that a more minute investigation of the history of that people will tend to remove the difficulties which many labour under in

* Lord's Discovery of the Banian Religion, Chap. 6.

† De diluvio multa est apud Sinaros Scriptores mentio. De alius origine: nullaque, nulla. Quod proinde Noëisum fuerit, an aliud Sinis peculiare, quale Ogygium olim in Attica, in Thessalia Deucalionium nondum liquet. Illud proberis impertum, Sinesem de diluvio historiam non tantum a Noëto abesse, quippe quæ sex mille circiter Annis vulgarem Christi epocham prægreditur. — Martini Histor. Sin. L. I. p. 12. See also Le Chou-King, par M. de Guignes, 1759.

‡ Ad universale diluvium, quod attinet, nihil adhuc quidem certi vel explorati, in Sinarum libris ac monumentis inveniri. Ooster Praef. ad Tab. Chron. 1750.

§ See Du Halde's History of China, and Mémoires concernant l'Histoire, les Sciences, les Arts, &c. des Chinois, a Paris 1776. — The letters indeed of De Maille prefixed to the Histoire générale de la Chine, carry the Origin of the Chinese to an Era not consistent with the Hebrew Chronology, but sufficiently conformable to that of the Septuagint.

their attempts to derive all the human species from one common stock.

I KNOW, that many look upon the account of an universal deluge as a mere fable; and hold the idea of all mankind having originated from a common stock, whether you suppose that stock to have been Adam, or Noah, as very unphilosophical: This is not a place to combat their philosophy; but surely it is no trifling proof of the Novelty of the human race upon the surface of the earth, that no part of antient history, which deserves credit, reaches; according to the opinion of Varro the most learned of the Romans, beyond the first Olympiad. The annals, indeed, of India and China seem to form an objection to this observation; but future examination, will, probably, shew it to be an objection of no weight. The Chaldeans formerly boasted, as the Indians and Chinese do now, of their great Antiquity; and were said to have kept astronomical observations for four hundred and seventy thousand years: but when Aristotle intreated Callisthenes to inquire into the antiquity of the Chaldeans, he received for answer, that, upon the taking of Babylon by

by Alexander, he could not find that they were possessed of any observations which reached above 1903 years backwards*. Now Babylon was taken by Alexander 331 years before Christ; which number, being added to the former, gives 2234 years before Christ, for the utmost known limit of Babylonish antiquity; and this number falls, upon the most moderate computation, above one hundred years short of the æra assigned for the deluge.

If therefore we should be able to find in the histories of the Eastern nations as certain traditions concerning a deluge, and as certain proofs of the invalidity of their pretensions to any great antiquity, as are confessedly to be met with in every other quarter of the globe, should we not have great reason to acquiesce in the account given by Moses of the deluge, and the subsequent spreading of the descendants of Noah over all the Earth, notwithstanding the difficulties which may attend our endeavours to explain the manner in which the deluge was effected, or the doubts which some have suggested concerning it's having ever taken

* Vossius de Ætate Mundi, Cap. ix.

place from their not being able to discover any vestiges of it on the surface of the Earth? We had been taught by Woodward, and others, to look upon the shells and other exuviae of fishes, which are found in most mountainous countries, as it unequivocal marks of a deluge; and to consider the impressions of plants, which are met with far beneath the surface of the earth in many mines, especially in those of coal, as proofs of the plants themselves being buried there by the deluge; but all these, and other similar conclusions are now to be abandoned; for it is the opinion, not of a shallow dabbler in the Science of nature, but of the great Linnæus himself, that whatever marks there may be of a slow and almost insensible conversion of sea into dry land, there are none of a deluge any where to be found. —

Cataclysmi universalis certa rudera ego non dum attingi, quousque penetravi; minus etiam veram terram Adamiticam, sed ubique vidi factas ex æquo Terras, et in his mera rudera longinquis sensim præterlapsi ævi.*

I AM

* Systema Naturæ, Tom. III. p. 5. — In opposition to this opinion, I will give a quotation from a modern work of great credit, without entering deeper into a question of con-

I AM far from subscribing to this opinion; but were it even admitted to be true, you will probably think, that an universal tradition concerning a deluge is a more certain proof of the fact, than the hypothesis of a natural historian can be of to the contrary.

BUT besides the universality of the tradition concerning a deluge, which a more minute acquaintance with the general history of mankind would probably establish; other proofs of a common Origin might be expected from the inquiry: The descendants of Noah probably lived together as one family after the deluge, till their increasing numbers forced them to separate, in search of a habitable land, which was a considerable difficulty. Il y a donc des coquillages fossiles par toute la terre, et la déluge qui les y a répandus doit être réputé universel: ces coquillages sont les reliques: ils servent de monumens éternels de son ancienne existence. La Conchyliologie, par M. D'Argenville, Tom. I. p. 113, A Paris, 1780: In this work (p. 97.) there is the following quotation, which may be urged against that of Linnæus — Quâ occasione testacea ista è loco natali suo, nimirum Oceanò, in terram continentem tantâ copiâ pervenerint; referre ad diluvium universale: quæ quidem Opinio tam firmiter infixa est animo meo, ut quotquot inter eos testacea è marinis fossilia, totidem catholici illius cataclysmi monumenta videre me arbitrer, aureis veluti inscripta literis memoria universalis diluvii. Bajetus, Oryd. Norica, p. 67.

of new habitations; but whilst they remained united as one body, they would have many customs civil and religious in common; would be acquainted with the make and application of many instruments, military and œconomical; and this degree and kind of knowledge would accompany the several colonies into every part of the globe; so that one might reasonably enough expect, that all nations, at least, in their infancy, would have some agreement in things of this sort, on the supposition that they were all derived from the same root. If Great Britain should in the course of two or three thousand years sink into that state of Barbarism, in which Cæsar found it, yet it is probable, that from a similarity of customs then subsisting in Britain, and America, a philosopher might investigate a common Origin. You would not allow me time to enlarge upon several customs, which were very general, and are too singular to have sprung from any *common necessity* of mankind; such as the Olive branch being a signal of peace, not only amongst Greeks and Romans, but likewise amongst the Alpine nations, who met Hannibal in his passage; amongst the Americans, who ad-
dressed

dressed Columbus; amongst other barbarians mentioned by Dampier; and among the inhabitants of the southern Isles; discovered by our late navigators. Human sacrifices, serpent worship, cuttings in the flesh at funerals, sounding of trumpets, &c. during eclipses, libations of milk, wine, &c. before meals, and many other customs might be mentioned; and a further investigation may still discover more, which have had almost an universal prevalence amongst mankind*. Add to this the similarity of shape observable in the spears, helmets, bows, trumpets, drums, hatchets, chisels, hooks, nets, boats, and many other instruments of the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Egyptians, Scythians, Americans, Chinese, Indians, New Zealanders, Sandwich Islanders, and most other nations; and we may perhaps be induced to think that this similarity of customs and instruments amongst nations very distant in situation, and in other respects wholly dif-

* The President de Goguet esteems the distinguishing the different sexes by different garbs, the distinguishing persons invested with high dignities by peculiar exterior ornaments, and the keeping solemn festivals on particular occasions, to have been customs common to all ages and countries, and that they are proofs of all men having sprung from one family. Goguet's Orig. of Laws, Vol. 1. p. 329. Eng. Tran.

ferent in manness, may point in some degree towards a common Origin of the human race. By way of illustration, I will mention a few customs, which were wholly the same amongst people as far removed from each other as the Egyptians and Peruvians.

The most ancient temples of the Egyptians had no statues; and the famous temple of the Sun in Peru is said to have had none.

The Egyptians embalmed the bodies of their kings, and converted their sepulchres into temples; the Peruvians preserved the carcases of their dead kings with as much art as the Egyptians; and placed them on golden seats in their temples.

The Egyptians held the rainbow (that token by which God covenanted never more to destroy the earth by a flood) in the highest veneration; the Peruvians built a temple to the rainbow; painted it's image on the walls of the temple; and celebrated it's appearance by clapping of hands, and other marks of festivity. Their kings, moreover, had a rainbow and two serpents painted

ed on their shields, as mystic symbols probably of the lapse of our first parents, and of the preservation of Noah.

THE Egyptians held sacred a perpetual fire; the Peruvians did the same, and had a college of virgins dedicated to the sun for it's guardians.

THE Egyptians divided the zodiac into twelve parts; the Peruvians did the same, and used the same year with the Egyptians.

THE Egyptian priests, before the celebration of their sacred rites, were obliged to use connubial abstinence, to bathe, and to fast; the Peruvian priests were subject to similar injunctions.

THE Egyptian women made sacred cakes of flour, which they offered to the queen of heaven; — at their principal solar festivals called *Raymi* and *Cátua*, the Peruvian women did the same.

To mention but one circumstance more — Diodorus Siculus informs us, that, of the three parts, into which Egypt was divided,

vided, the priests had one for the maintenance of religion; the Peruvians made a similar division of their territory, and dedicated one part out of three to the Sun; and, from the revenue arising from that part, they supported the priests of the Sun, and the whole of their religious establishment *.

I AM not here undertaking to derive the Peruvians from the Egyptians; but simply to shew, that an accurate attention to the customs of mankind in different parts of the globe might serve as a clue so far at least to connect different nations, as to make us receive with less reluctance, than some men shew, the Mosaic relation of the manner, in which the earth has been peopled.

THE discoveries, relative to the Geography of the Globe, which have been made by British navigators, under the auspices of his Majesty, will ever be remembered to his honour. But navigators, though animated by the spirit of enterprise, and possessed of the most enlarged understandings, have seldom any favourable opportunity of becom-

* Compare *Witfi Egyptiaca* with the *History of Peru* by *Garcilasso de la Vega*.

ing acquainted with the civil and religious customs, oral traditions, and written histories of the nations, which they may happen to meet with. Information of this kind, such as one would wish to rely on, cannot ordinarily be obtained without a long and familiar intercourse with the inhabitants of a country.

BUT the subject is infinite, and I must have already wearied out your attention; the sum of what I would advance is this — that a translation of the chief Oriental Manuscripts, and an examination into the ancient and modern state of the Manners, Arts, and Literature of the Eastern nations, would greatly contribute towards perfecting our knowledge of the Natural History of the Globe, and of the Civil History of the human species; and, in particular, it would, I verily trust, tend to remove many of the difficulties, which have been conceived against the Authority of Moses, from the supposed high antiquity of the eastern histories, and their silence concerning a deluge.

As to the means of accomplishing this end, they might be pointed out with great facility.

facility: A small society of proper persons, part of whom should be employed at home in translating, and the other part in travelling to collect materials, would complete the business in half a century. The public expence, attending the maintenance of such a society, would be but as a drop in the ocean, compared with what is annually expended for less beneficial purposes; but, without increasing the public burdens, by recurring to Parliamentary liberality, we need have no fear of obtaining from Royal Munificence, or private benefaction, such aids, as when added to other resources; which the University has a prospect of speedily possessing, would be sufficient for the purpose.

I HOPE, no Apology will be thought necessary for having entered so fully into a literary subject; when it is considered, that I am addressing a body of Clergy, and that within the precincts of the University of Cambridge.

APPENDIX.

UNDER the auspices of *Sir William Jones*, whose zeal in promoting Science can be exceeded by nothing but his ability, a Society has been instituted at *Calcutta* for the advancement of *Asiatic Literature*. It would be an impertinent attempt to endeavour to foretell the many advantages which may be derived to Natural and Civil History, to Languages, Arts, and Sciences in general, from the future exertions of this Society; I have great pleasure, however, in assuring the Reader that a Tradition concerning a deluge does certainly subsist in *Indostan*. *Sir W. Jones*, to whom I recommend the inquiry, has had the goodness to inform me, that he has learned the sacred language of the country, and that in their oldest Mythological books there is such an account of the deluge, as corresponds sufficiently with that of *Moses*. I look upon this to be a valuable piece of information; nor can it's importance be invalidated, unless it can be shewn that the testimony of *Moses*, and the testimony of the ancient Indian writers, are both of them derived from a common source, and that source a fabulous one.

THERE

THERE are, and there probably ever will be, great difficulties in explaining the manner in which the deluge was brought about; but the *universality* of the tradition concerning it, and the multitude of *rites* instituted by the antient inhabitants of every quarter of the globe in commemoration of it; joined to the *recent* origin of empires and arts; and the *paucity* of mankind now subsisting on the earth; give a preponderance to the opinions of those who think, that the irregular appearance of the earth, and the remains of vegetable and of marine productions, which are found on it's surface or buried in it's bowels, are sufficient proofs of the fact. Philosophers have some difficulty in reconciling natural appearances with the Mosaic relation of the creation and the deluge, but the history of the human race in every part of the globe confirms them both.

WHOEVER has read of, or seen the changes introduced into the appearance of the adjacent grounds, by the inundation even of a large river, and contemplated the different layers of stones, gravel, sand, and vegetable soil, which, being brought down from the mountains by the violence of the stream, have

have been deposited with more or less uniformity according as the waters have had a free and direct, or an obstructed and angular course, will find no great difficulty in enlarging his ideas till he forms some, though still a very inadequate, conception of the changes made in the appearance of the earth by the waters of the universal deluge. These overspreading to a great depth the surface of the earth, fluctuating with incredible violence in various directions, rushing in tremendous cataracts from the chasms of mountains, burying promiscuously in unfathomable whirlpools minerals, and vegetables, terrestrial and aquatic animals, or disposing them horizontally on immense plains with astonishing regularity, must have much changed universally the outward face of the globe, and in many parts have affected to a great distance it's internal construction. To these and similar effects of a mere Inundation we ought, probably, to add, in acquiring a proper notion of the deluge, the effects of earthquakes, by which many parts of the present surface of the earth were raised, there is reason to believe, from the bottom of the ocean, shattered in various directions, and broken into different forms

forms at the time of the deluge, when *the mountains of the great deep were broken up*.

THERE is reason, it is said, to believe that earthquakes (proceeding from subterraneous fires) were instrumental in effecting the deluge; for though the shells, and other remains of marine animals, which are found in many parts of the earth; might be accounted for from a mere inundation of the waters of the ocean; yet those which are imbedded in such limestone and marble strata as are situated either far beneath the surface of the earth, or elevated far above it, in mountainous countries, were, probably, *generated, and lived and died* in the very beds wherein they are found: The primitive state of the earth seems to have been totally metamorphosed by the first convulsion of nature, at the time of the deluge; its *strata* broken, and thrown into every possible degree of confusion and disorder. Thus, those mighty eminences the Alps, the Andes, the Pyrenean mountains, &c. were brought from beneath the great deep — the sea retired from those vast tracts of land, the continents — became fathomless; environed with craggy rocks, cliffs, and impending

ing shores, and it's bottom spread over with mountains and vallies like the land*." I have made this quotation from one of the most rational and ingenious books that has ever been written on the original state and formation of the earth; but I do not certainly know who first advanced the notion of our present continent having been the bottom of the antediluvian ocean.

MR. KING, in the Philosophical Transactions for 1767, amongst other ingenious observations makes the following one—
 “Originally Almighty God created this earth with sea and land in the same proportion as they now remain, and it continued in that state for many ages, during which the bottom of the sea became covered with shells and various heterogeneous bodies; and from the first of it's creation there were also many subterraneous fires found within the bowels of the earth, and that at the appointed time these fires bursting forth at once with great violence under the sea, raised up the bottom of the ocean so as to pour out the water over the face of what was be-

* Whitehurst's Inquiry into the State and Formation of the Earth, p. 89. 1st Ed. 1778.

fore dry land, which by that means became sea, and has, perhaps, continued so ever since, as that which was before the flood the bottom of the sea, probably, from that time has continued to be continent and dry land."

AN *Italian Writer* published a book at Venice in 1740, in which he maintained that mountains had been raised from the sea by subterraneous fires; and had carried with them the shells of fishes, and other marine bodies usually found at the bottom of the ocean*.

THE reverend *Ab. de la Pryme*, in a Letter, published in the *Philosophical Transactions* †, and dated from Hull in the year 1700, expresses himself in the following terms—"My notion of the antediluvian world is, that it had an external sea as well as land, and mountains, hills, rivers, and fruitful fields, and plains; that it was about the bigness our earth is at present of; and that when God had a mind for the wickedness of the inhabitants that dwelt

* *Crustacei è de gli altri marini corpi che si trovano sul Monti. Da Ant. Lazaro Moro.*

† No. 266.

therein

therein to destroy the same by water; he broke the foundations and subterraneous caverns and pillars thereof with most dreadful earthquakes, and caused the same to be for the most part if not wholly swallowed up and covered by the seas that we now have, and that this earth of ours did then rise out of the bottom of the antediluvian sea in it's room; just as many islands are swallowed up and others thrust up in their stead. And thus it comes to pass, that we find shells, &c. lodged in stone, rocks, mountains, quarries and pitts over our whole earth; for it was then the proper place for them to breed in and upon, and to be found in and upon at this present."

IN *Mr. Hooke's* Discourse of Earthquakes, which was written about the year 1688, there is mention made of the bottom of the sea having been raised by subterraneous fires; and he accounts for the shells which are found on mountains from that principle, and thinks it not improbable that earthquakes were instrumental in occasioning the deluge — "The Alps and divers other high mountains, on whose tops are found such numbers and such varieties of sea shells

shells * may have been heretofore raised up from the bottom of the sea—it is not improbable but in the flood of Noah, the Omnipotent might make use of this means [earthquakes] to produce that great effect *.”

THERE is a passage in *Josephus* which some may think countenances the notion of the antient Continent having been changed into the present sea; whilst others will be of opinion that when he says, God at the time of the deluge *changed the Continent into sea*, so that all men were destroyed; he simply meant to say, that all men were drowned in consequence of the then Continent being overflowed by the waters of the deluge †.

I WILL conclude this subject with laying before the reader a very curious account of

* There is a diversity of testimony on this subject; for some affirm that no marine productions whatever are found on the tops of the Alps, &c. The difficulty may, probably, be removed, by observing that in mountainous countries the mountains are of different heights, and though the highest mountains may be formed of granite, in which there are no shells, yet the other mountains which have been formed in strata upon the granite may have shells.

* Discourse on Earthquakes, p. 324 and 328.

† — Εἰς θάλασσαν τὴν ἠπείρου μετέβαλε, καὶ οἱ μὲν ὕπνῳ ἀφανίζονται πάντες. *Joseph. Antiq. Jud. L. I. c. 3.*

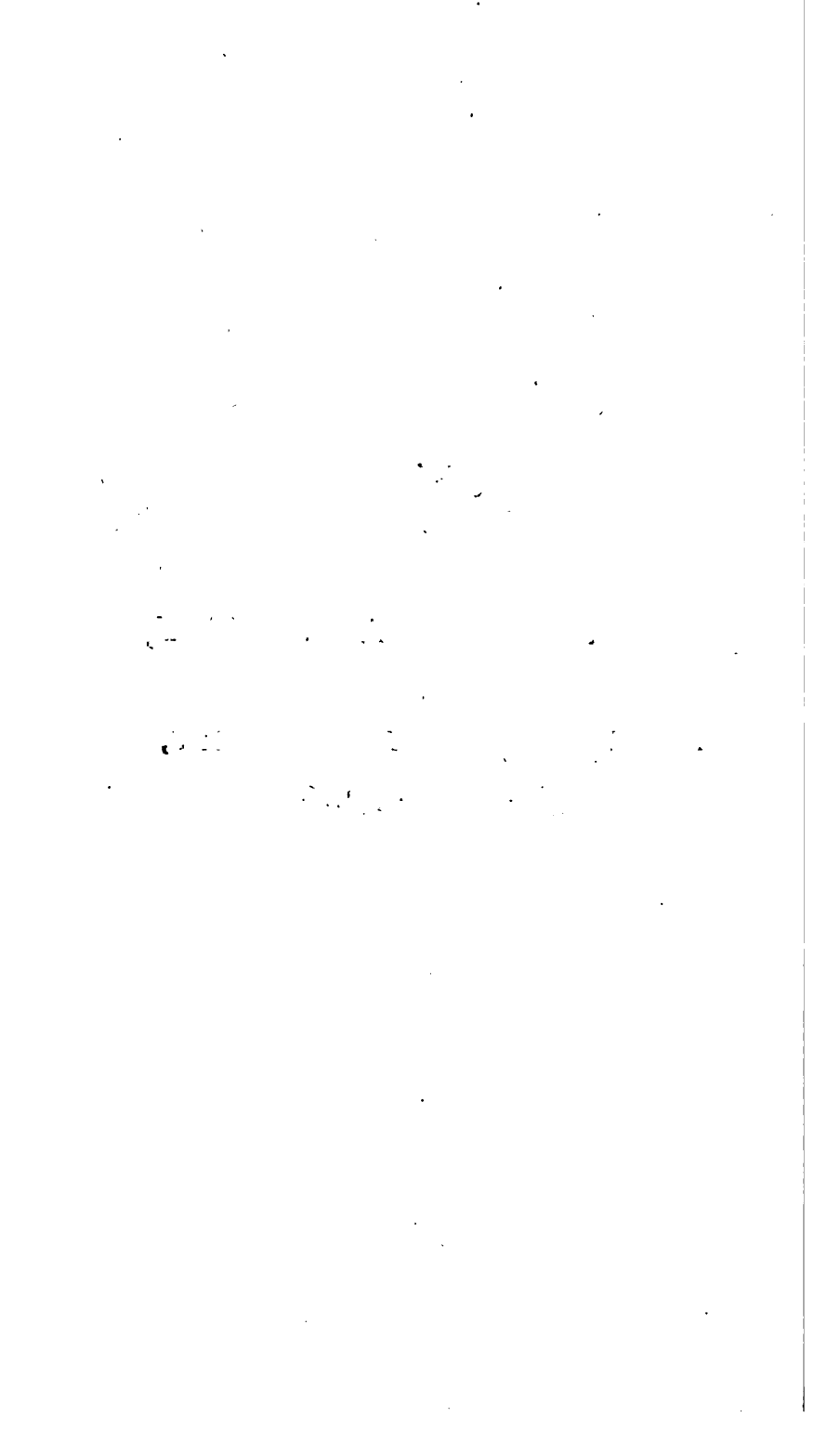
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the primitive state of the earth, and the subsequent deluge, taken, as it is said, from the most antient annals of *Æthiopia*. The passage is quoted in the *Flora Saturnifans* of Henckel (Paris Ed. 1760.) from the works of Rammazini, and is as follows — Narrat quidam sapiens *Abyssinus* in antiquissimis *Æthiopiæ* annalibus descriptam esse historiam perditionis humani generis, et disruptionis totius terræ. In mundi scilicet primordiis fuisse terram multo acceptiorem, quam nunc est, ac cælo proximior, perfecte *rotundam, sine montibus, ac vallibus, totam tamen intus cavernosam*, ad instar spongiæ, hominesque in illa habitantes ac æthere purissimo gaudentes jucundum ævum duxisse; terra inarata optimas fruges et fructus ferente. Cùm autem post diuturnum sæculorum fluxum, homines superbia elati, a prisca illa bonitate descivissent, deos iratos terram adeo valide concussisse, ut major illius pars *intra proprias cavernas defederit*, hoc pacto aquam in latebrosis recessibus ante conclusam, expressam violenter fuisse, atque ita fontes, flumina, lacus, et *mare ipsum ortum duxisse*, eam vero terræ portionem quæ intra has cavernas non decidisset, sed reliqua elatior stetit, *montium formam* exhibuisse; *insulas*

porro et scopulos in medio mare nihil aliud esse, nisi segmenta terræ cavernosæ ab illo totius terrenæ molis præcipiti casu superstitis.

I HAVE produced this curious passage, not merely as a proof of there having been a singular tradition of a deluge, subsisting amongst the antient inhabitants of Æthiopia; but to shew how great a resemblance it bears to the hypothesis, which *Burnet* has adorned with all the elegance of pure Latinity in his *Theoria Telluris*. The primitive earth, according to *Burnet*, was round, without mountains, without valleys, without a sea, built upon an abyss of waters; by the falling of this crust of earth into the abyss, the deluge was occasioned, a sea, and mountains, and rocks, and islands were formed. — No words need be employed in shewing how all this coincides with the tradition of the Æthiopians expressed in the preceding quotation.

AN
A P O L O G Y
FOR
CHRISTIANITY,
IN
A SERIES OF LETTERS,
PRINTED IN 1776.



LETTER FIRST,

S I R,

IT would give me much uneasiness to be reputed an Enemy to free inquiry in religious matters, or as capable of being animated into any degree of personal malevolence against those who differ from me in opinion. On the contrary, I look upon the right of private judgment, in every concern respecting God and ourselves, as superior to the controul of human authority; and have ever regarded free disquisition, as the best mean of illustrating the doctrine, and establishing the truth of Christianity. Let the followers of Mahomet, and the zealots of the church of Rome, support their several religious systems by damping every effort of the human intellect to pry into the foundations of their faith; but never can it become a Christian, to be afraid of being asked a *reason of the faith that is in him*; nor
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a Protestant, to be studious of enveloping his religion in mystery and ignorance; nor the church of England, to abandon that moderation, by which she permits every individual *et sentire quæ velit, et quæ sentiat dicere.*

IT is not, Sir, without some reluctance, that, under the influence of these opinions, I have prevailed upon myself to address these letters to you; and you will attribute to the same motive, my not having given you this trouble sooner. I had moreover an expectation, that the task would have been undertaken by some person, capable of doing greater justice to the subject, and more worthy of your attention. Perceiving however, that the two last chapters, the fifteenth in particular, of your very laborious and classical history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire, had made upon many an impression not at all advantageous to Christianity; and that the silence of others, of the Clergy especially, began to be looked upon as an acquiescence in what you had therein advanced; I have thought it my duty, with the utmost respect and goodwill towards you, to take the liberty of suggesting

gesting to your consideration, a few remarks upon some of the passages, which have been esteemed, (whether you meant, that they should be so esteemed, or not) as powerfully militating against that revelation, which still is to many, what it formerly was *to the Greeks, Foolishness*; but which we deem to be true, *to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*

To the inquiry by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth, you rightly answer, By the evidence of the doctrine itself, and the ruling providence of it's Author. But afterwards, in assigning for this astonishing event five secondary causes, derived from the passions of the human heart and the general circumstances of mankind, you seem to some to have insinuated, that Christianity, like other Impostures, might have made it's way in the world, though it's origin had been as human as the means by which you suppose it was spread. It is no wish or intention of mine, to fasten the odium of this insinuation upon you; I shall simply endeavour to shew, that the causes you produce, are either inadequate

quate to the attainment of the end proposed; or that their efficiency, great as you imagine it, was derived from other principles than those, you have thought proper to mention.

YOUR first cause is "the inflexible, and, if you may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit, which instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses." — Yes, Sir, we are agreed, that the zeal of the Christians was inflexible, *neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, could bend it into a separation from the love of God, which was in Christ Jesus their Lord*; it was an inflexible obstinacy, in not blaspheming the name of Christ, which every where exposed them to persecution; and which even your amiable and philosophic Pliny thought proper, for want of other crimes, to punish with death in the Christians of his province. — We are agreed too, that the zeal of the Christians was intolerant; for it denounced *tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man* that

that did evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; it would not tolerate in Christian worship, those who supplicated the image of Cæsar, who bowed down at the altars of Paganism, who mixed with the votaries of Venus, or wallowed in the filth of Bacchanalian festivals.

BUT though we are thus far agreed, with respect to the inflexibility and intolerance of Christian zeal; yet as to the principle from which it was derived, we are *toto cælo* divided in opinion. You deduce it from the Jewish religion; I would refer it to a more adequate and a more obvious source, a full persuasion of the truth of Christianity. What! think you that it was a zeal derived from the unsociable spirit of Judaism, which inspired Peter with courage to upbraid the whole people of the Jews in the very capital of Judea, with having *delivered up Jesus, with having denied him in the presence of Pilate, with having desired a murderer to be granted them in his stead, with having killed the Prince of life?* Was it from this principle, that the same Apostle in conjunction with John, when summoned, not before the dregs of the people, (whose judgments they might have

have been supposed capable of misleading, and whose resentment they might have despised,) but before the rulers and the elders and the scribes, the dread Tribunal of the Jewish nation, and commanded by them to teach no more in the name of Jesus; boldly answered, *that they could not but speak the things, which they had seen and heard? — they had seen with their eyes, they had handled with their hands the word of life*; and no human jurisdiction could deter them from being faithful witnesses of what they had seen and heard. Here then you may perceive the genuine and undoubted origin of that zeal, which you ascribe to what appears to me a very insufficient cause; and which the Jewish rulers were so far from considering as the ordinary effect of their religion, that they were exceedingly at a loss how to account for it; — *now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.* The Apostles, heedless of consequences, and regardless of every thing but truth, openly every where professed themselves witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, and with a confidence, which could proceed from nothing but conviction, and which
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pricked the Jews to the heart, bade *the house of Israel know assuredly, that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

I MEAN not to produce these instances of apostolic zeal, as direct proofs of the truth of Christianity; for every religion, nay, every absurd sect of every religion, has had it's zealots, who have not scrupled to maintain their principles at the expence of their lives; and we ought no more to infer the truth of Christianity from the mere zeal of it's propagators, than the truth of Mahometanism from that of a Turk. When a man suffers himself to be covered with infamy, pillaged of his property, and dragged at last to the block or the stake, rather than give up his opinion; the proper inference is, not that his opinion is true, but that he believes it to be true; and a question of serious discussion immediately presents itself, — upon what foundation has he built his belief? This is often an intricate inquiry, including in it a vast compass of human learning; a Bramin or a Mandarin, who should observe a missionary attesting the truth of Christianity with his blood, would,
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notwithstanding, have a right to ask many questions, before it could be expected, that he should give an assent to our faith. In the case indeed of the Apostles, the inquiry would be much less perplexed; since it would briefly resolve itself into this,—whether they were credible reporters of facts; which they themselves professed to have seen:—and it would be an easy matter to shew, that their zeal in attesting what they were certainly competent to judge of, could not proceed from any alluring prospect of worldly interest or ambition, or from any other probable motive than a love of truth.

BUT the credibility of the Apostles' testimony, or their competency to judge of the facts which they relate, is not now to be examined; the question before us simply relates to the principle, by which their zeal was excited; and it is a matter of real astonishment to me, that any one conversant with the history of the first propagation of Christianity, acquainted with the opposition it every where met with from the people of the Jews, and aware of the repugnancy which must ever subsist between it's tenets and those of Judaism, should ever think of de-

deriving the zeal of the primitive Christians from the Jewish religion,

BOTH Jew and Christian, indeed, believed in one God, and abominated idolatry; but this detestation of idolatry, had it been unaccompanied with the belief of the resurrection of Christ, would probably have been just as inefficacious in exciting the zeal of the Christian to undertake the conversion of the Gentile world, as it had for ages been in exciting that of the Jew. But supposing, what I think you have not proved, and what I am certain cannot be admitted without proof, that a zeal derived from the Jewish religion inspired the first Christians with fortitude to oppose themselves to the institutions of Paganism; what was it, that encouraged them to attempt the conversion of their own countrymen? Amongst the Jews they met with no superstitious observances of idolatrous rites; and therefore amongst them, could have no opportunity of “declaring and confirming their zealous opposition to Polytheism, or of fortifying by frequent protestations their attachment to the Christian faith.” Here then at least, the cause you have assigned for Christian

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zeal ceases to operate; and we must look out for some other principle than a zeal against idolatry, or we shall never be able satisfactorily to explain the ardour, with which the Apostles pressed the disciples of Moses, to become the disciples of Christ.

AGAIN, does a determined opposition to, and an open abhorrence of, every the minutest part of an established religion, appear to you to be the most likely method of conciliating to another faith those who profess it? The Christians, you contend, could neither mix with the Heathens in their convivial entertainments, nor partake with them in the celebration of their solemn festivals; they could neither associate with them in their hymenæal, nor funereal rites; they could not cultivate their arts or be spectators of their shews; in short, in order to escape the rites of Polytheism, they were, in your opinion, obliged to renounce the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of life. Now, how such an extravagant and intemperate zeal as you here describe, can, humanly speaking, be considered as one of the chief causes of the quick propagation of Christianity, in opposition

fition to all the established powers of Paganism, is a circumstance I can by no means comprehend. The Jesuit missionaries, whose human prudence no one will question, were quite of a contrary way of thinking; and brought a deserved censure upon themselves, for not scrupling to propagate the faith of Christ, by indulging to their Pagan converts a frequent use of idolatrous ceremonies. Upon the whole it appears to me, that the Christians were in no wise indebted to the Jewish religion, for the zeal with which they propagated the gospel amongst Jews as well as Gentiles; and that such a zeal as you describe, let its principle be what you please, could never have been devised by any human understanding, as a probable mean of promoting the progress of a reformation in religion, much less could it have been thought of, or adopted by a few ignorant and unconnected men.

In expatiating upon this subject you have taken an opportunity of remarking, that “the contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles — and that in contradiction to every known principle of the

human mind, that singular people (the Jews) seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors, than to the evidence of their own senses." This observation bears hard upon the veracity of the Jewish scriptures; and, was it true, would force us either to reject them, or to admit a position as extraordinary as a miracle itself; — that the testimony of others produced in the human mind, a stronger degree of conviction concerning a matter of fact, than the testimony of the senses themselves. — It happens however, in the present case, that we are under no necessity of either rejecting the Jewish scriptures, or of admitting such an absurd position; for the fact is not true, that the contemporaries of Moses and Joshua beheld with careless indifference, the miracles related in the Bible to have been performed in their favour. That these miracles were not sufficient to awe the Israelites into an uniform obedience to the Theocracy, cannot be denied; but, whatever reasons may be thought best adapted to account for the propensity of the Jews to idolatry, and their frequent defection from the worship of the one true God, a "stubborn

born incredulity" cannot be admitted as one of them.

To men, indeed, whose understandings have been enlightened by the Christian revelation, and enlarged by all the aids of human learning; who are under no temptations to idolatry from without, and whose reason from within, would revolt at the idea of worshipping the infinite Author of the universe under any created symbol;—to men who are compelled, by the utmost exertion of their reason, to admit as an irrefragable truth, what puzzles the first principles of all reasoning—the eternal existence of an uncaused Being;—and who are conscious, that they cannot give a full account of any one phænomenon in nature, from the rotation of the great orbs of the universe to the germination of a blade of grass, without having recourse to him, as the primary incomprehensible cause of it;—and who from seeing him every where, have, by a strange fatality, (converting an excess of evidence into a principle of disbelief) at times doubted concerning his existence any where, and made the very universe their God;—to men of such a stamp, it appears

almost an incredible thing, that any human being which had seen the order of nature interrupted, or the uniformity of it's course suspended, though but for a moment, should ever afterwards lose the impression of reverential awe, which, they apprehend, would have been excited in their minds. But whatever effect the visible interposition of the Deity might have in removing the scepticism, or confirming the faith of a few Philosophers, it is with me a very great doubt, whether the people in general of our days, would be more strongly affected by it, than they appear to have been in the days of Moses.

WAS any people under heaven, to escape the certain destruction impending over them, from the close pursuit of an enraged and irresistible enemy, by seeing the waters of the Ocean *becoming a wall to them on their right hand and on their left*; they would, I apprehend, be agitated by the very same passions we are told, the Israelites were, when they saw the sea returning to his strength, and swallowing up the host of Pharaoh; they *would fear the Lord, they would believe the Lord, and they would express*

press their faith and their fear by praising the Lord : — they would not behold such a great work with *careless indifference*, but with astonishment and terror ; nor would you be able to detect the slightest vestige of *stubborn incredulity* in their song of gratitude. No length of time would be able to blot from their minds the memory of such a transaction, or induce a doubt concerning it's Author, though future hunger and thirst might make them call out for water and bread, with a desponding and rebellious importunity.

BUT it was not at the Red Sea only, that the Israelites regarded with something more than a *careless indifference* the amazing miracles which God had wrought ; for when the law was declared to them from mount Sinai, *all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the tempest, and the mountains smoking ; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off, and they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die.* — This again, Sir, is the Scripture account of the language of the contemporaries of Moses and Joshua ; and I leave it

to you to consider, whether this is the language of *stubborn incredulity, and careless indifference.*

WE are told in Scripture too, that whilst any of the *contemporaries* of Moses and Joshua were alive, the whole people served the Lord; the impression, which a sight of the miracles had made, was never effaced; nor the obedience, which might have been expected as a natural consequence, refused, till Moses and Joshua, and all their contemporaries, were gathered unto their fathers; till *another generation after them arose, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.* — *But the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.*

I AM far from thinking you, Sir, unacquainted with Scripture, or desirous of sinking the weight of it's testimony; but as the words of the history, from which you must have derived your observation, will not support you, in imputing *careless indifference* to the contemporaries of Moses, or *stubborn incredulity* to the forefathers of the Jews; I
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know not what can have induced you to pass so severe a censure upon them, except that you look upon a lapse into idolatry as a proof of infidelity. In answer to this, I would remark, that with equal soundness of argument we ought to infer, that every one who transgresses a religion, disbelieves it; and that every individual, who in any community incurs civil pains and penalties, is a disbeliever of the existence of the authority by which they are inflicted. The sanctions of the Mosaic law were, in your opinion, terminated within the narrow limits of this life; in that particular then, they must have resembled the sanctions of all other civil laws; *transgress and die* is the language of every one of them, as well as that of Moses; and I know not what reason we have to expect, that the Jews, who were animated by the same hopes of temporal rewards, impelled by the same fears of temporal punishments with the rest of mankind, should have been so singular in their conduct, as never to have listened to the clamours of passion before the still voice of reason; as never to have preferred a present gratification of sense, in the lewd celebration of
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idolatrous rites, before the rigid observance of irksome ceremonies.

BEFORE I release you from the trouble of this letter, I cannot help observing, that I could have wished you had furnished your reader with Limborch's answers to the objections of the Jew Orobio, concerning the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses; you have indeed mentioned Limborch with respect, in a short note; but though you have studiously put into the mouths of the Judaizing Christians in the Apostolic days, and with great strength inserted into your text, whatever has been said by Orobio, or others against Christianity, from the supposed perpetuity of the Mosaic dispensation; yet you have not favoured us with any one of the numerous replies, which have been made to these seemingly strong objections. You are pleased, it is true, to say, "that the industry of our learned divines has abundantly explained the ambiguous language of the old Testament, and the ambiguous conduct of the Apostolic teachers." It requires, Sir, no learned industry, to explain what is so obvious and so express, that he who runs
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may read it: The language of the old Testament is this; *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.* This, methinks, is a clear and solemn declaration, there is no ambiguity at all in it, that the covenant with Moses was not to be perpetual, but was in some future time to give way to a *new covenant*. I will not detain you with an explanation of what Moses himself has said upon this subject; but you may try, if you please, whether you can apply the following declaration, which Moses made to the Jews, to any prophet or succession of prophets, with the same propriety that you can to Jesus Christ; — *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken.* If you think this ambiguous or obscure, I answer, That it is not a history, but a prophecy; and as such unavoidably liable to some degree of obscurity, till interpreted by the event.

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NOR was the conduct of the Apostles more ambiguous, than the language of the old Testament; they did not indeed at first comprehend the whole of the nature of the new dispensation; and when they did understand it better, they did not think proper upon every occasion to use their Christian liberty; but, with true Christian charity, accommodated themselves in matters of indifference to the prejudices of their weaker brethren. But he who changes his conduct with a change of sentiments, proceeding from an increase of knowledge, is not ambiguous in his conduct; nor should he be accused of a culpable duplicity, who in a matter of the last importance endeavours to conciliate the good-will of all, by conforming in a few innocent observances to the particular persuasions of different men.

ONE remark more, and I have done. In your account of the Gnostics, you have given us a very minute catalogue of the objections, which they made to the authority of Moses, from his account of the creation, of the patriarchs, of the law, and of the
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the attributes of the Deity: I have not leisure to examine, whether the Gnostics of former ages really made all the objections you have mentioned. I take it for granted, upon your authority, that they did: But I am certain if they did, that the Gnostics of modern times have no reason to be puffed up with their knowledge, or to be had in admiration as men of subtle penetration or refined erudition; they are all miserable copiers of their brethren of antiquity; and neither Morgan, nor Tindal, nor Bolingbroke, nor Voltaire, have been able to produce scarce a single new objection. You think, that the Fathers have not properly answered the Gnostics. I make no question, Sir, you are able to answer them to your own satisfaction; and informed of every thing, that has been said by our *industrious divines* upon the subject: And we should have been glad, if it had fallen in with your plan to have administered together with the poison it's antidote; but since that is not the case, lest it's malignity should spread too far, I must just mention it to my younger readers, that Leland and others, in their replies to the modern Deists, have given

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given very full, and, as many learned men apprehend, very satisfactory answers to every one of the objections, which you have derived from the Gnostic heresy.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER SECOND.

S I R,

“**T**HE doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance, which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth,” is the second of the causes to which you attribute the quick increase of Christianity. Now if we impartially consider the circumstances of the persons, to whom the doctrine, not simply of a future life, but of a future life accompanied with punishments as well as rewards; not only of the immortality of the soul, but of the immortality of the soul accompanied with that of the resurrection, was delivered; I cannot be of opinion that, abstracted from the supernatural testimony by which it was enforced, it could have met with any very extensive reception amongst them.

It was not that kind of future life, which they expected; it did not hold out to them
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the punishments of the infernal regions, as *aniles fabulas*: To the question, *Quid si post mortem maneat animi?* they could not answer with Cicero and the philosophers, — *Beatos esse concedo*; — because there was a great probability, that it might be quite otherwise with them. I am not to learn, that there are passages to be picked up in the writings of the antients, which might be produced as proofs of their expecting a future state of punishment for the flagitious; but this opinion was worn out of credit, before the time of our Saviour: The whole disputation in the first book of the *Tusculan Questions*, goes upon the other supposition: Nor was the absurdity of the doctrine of future punishments confined to the writings of the philosophers, or the circles of the learned and polite; for Cicero, to mention no others, makes no secret of it in his public pleadings before the people at large. You yourself, Sir, have referred to his oration for *Cluentius*; in this oration, you may remember, he makes great mention of a very abandoned fellow, who had forged I know not how many wills, murdered I know not how many wives, and perpetrated a thousand other villainies; yet
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even to this profligate, by name Oppianicus, he is persuaded, that death was not the occasion of any evil*. Hence, I think, we may conclude, that such of the Romans, as were not wholly infected with the annihilating notions of Epicurus, but entertained, (whether from remote tradition, or enlightened argumentation,) hopes of a future life, had no manner of expectation of such a life, as included in it the severity of punishment, denounced in the Christian scheme against the wicked.

NOR was it that kind of future life, which they wished; they would have been glad enough of an Elysium, which could have admitted into it men who had spent this life, in the perpetration of every vice, which can debase and pollute the human heart. To abandon every seducing gratification of sense, to pluck up every latent root of ambition, to subdue every impulse of revenge, to divest themselves of every inveterate habit, in which their glory and their pleasure con-

* Nam nunc quidem quid tandem mali illi mors attulit? nisi forte ineptiis ac fabulis ducimur, ut existimemus apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre; ac plures illic offendisse inimicos quam hic reliquisse — quæ si falsa sint, id quod omnes intelligunt, &c.

fisted; to do all this and more, before they could look up to the doctrine of a future life; without terror and amazement, was not, one would think, an easy undertaking; nor was it likely, that many would forsake the religious institutions of their ancestors, set at nought the gods, under whose auspices the Capitol had been founded, and Rome made mistress of the world, and suffer themselves to be persuaded into the belief of a tenet, the very mention of which made Felix tremble, by any thing less than a full conviction of the supernatural authority of those who taught it.

THE several schools of Gentile philosophy had discussed, with no small subtlety, every argument, which reason could suggest, for and against the immortality of the soul; and those uncertain glimmerings of the light of nature, would have prepared the minds of the learned for the reception of the full illustration of this subject by the gospel, had not the resurrection been a part of the doctrine therein advanced. But that this corporal frame, which is hourly mouldering away, and resolved at last into the undistinguished mass of elements, from which it was at first de-

derived, should ever be *clothed with immortality*; that *this corruptible should ever put on incorruption*, is a truth so far removed from the apprehension of philosophical research, so dissonant from the common conceptions of mankind, that amongst all ranks and persuasions of men it was esteemed an impossible thing. At Athens the philosophers had listened with patience to St. Paul, whilst they conceived him but a *setter forth of strange gods*; but as soon as they comprehended, that by the *αναστασις*, he meant the resurrection, they turned from him with contempt. It was principally the insisting upon the same topic, which made Festus think, *that much learning had made him mad*: And the questions, *how are the dead raised up?* and, *with what body do they come?* seem, by Paul's solicitude to answer them with fullness and precision, to have been not unfrequently proposed to him, by those who were desirous of becoming Christians.

THE doctrine of a future life then, as promulged in the gospel, being neither agreeable to the expectations, nor corresponding with the wishes, nor conformable

to the reason of the Gentiles, I can discover no motive, (setting aside the true one, the divine power of it's first preachers) which could induce them to receive it; and in consequence of their belief, to conform their loose morals to the rigid standard of gospel purity; upon the mere authority of a few contemptible fishermen of Judea. And even you yourself, Sir, seem to have changed your opinion concerning the efficacy of the expectation of a future life in converting the Heathens, when you observe in the following chapter; that "the Pagan multitude reserving their gratitude for temporal benefits alone, rejected the inestimable present of life and immortality, which was offered to mankind by Jesus of Nazareth."

MONTESQUIEU is of opinion, that it will ever be impossible for Christianity to establish itself in China and the east, from this circumstance, that it prohibits a plurality of wives: How then could it have been possible for it to have pervaded the voluptuous Capital, and traversed the utmost limits of the empire of Rome, by the feeble efforts of human industry, or human knavery?

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• BUT the Gentiles, you are of opinion, were converted by their fears; and reckon the doctrines of Christ's speedy appearance, of the millennium, and of the general conflagration, amongst those additional circumstances, which gave weight to that concerning a future state. Before I proceed to the examination of the efficiency of these several circumstances, in alarming the apprehensions of the Gentiles, what if I should grant your position? still the main question recurs, From what source did they derive the fears, which converted them? Not surely from the mere human labours of men, who were every where spoken against, made a spectacle of, and considered as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things — not surely from the human powers of him, who professed himself *rude in speech, in bodily presence contemptible, and a despiser of the excellency of speech, and the enticing words of men's wisdom.* No, such wretched instruments were but ill fitted, to inspire the haughty, and the learned Romans, with any other passions than those of pity, or contempt.

Now, Sir, if you please, we will consider that universal expectation of the approach-

ing end of the world, which, you think, had such great influence in converting the Pagans to the profession of Christianity. The near approach, you say, of this wonderful event had been predicted by the Apostles, " though the revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us, not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation." That this opinion, even in the times of the Apostles, had made it's way into the Christian church, I readily admit; but that the Apostles ever, either predicted this event to others, or cherished the expectation of it in themselves, does not seem probable to me. As this is a point of some difficulty and importance, you will suffer me to explain it at some length.

IT must be owned, that there are several passages in the writings of the Apostles, which, at the first view, seem to countenance the opinion you have adopted. Now, says St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, *it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; The night is far spent, the day is at hand.* And in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, he comforts such of them as were sorrowing for

for the loss of their friends, by assuring them, that they were not lost for ever; but that the Lord when he came, would bring them with him; and that they would not, in the participation of any blessings, be in any wise behind those, who should happen then to be alive; *we*, says he, (the Christians of whatever age or country, agreeable to a frequent use of the pronoun *we*) *which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then, we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord.* In his epistle to the Philippians, he exhorts his Christian brethren, not to disquiet themselves with carking cares about their temporal concerns, from this powerful consideration, that the Lord was at hand; *let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand; be careful about nothing.* The Apostle to the Hebrews, inculcates the same doctrine, admonishing his converts *to provoke one another to love, and to good works; and so much the more, as they saw the day approaching.* The

age in which the Apostles lived, is frequently called by them the end of the world, the last days, the last hour. I think it unnecessary, Sir, to trouble you with an explication of these and other similar texts of scripture, which are usually adduced in support of your opinion; since I hope to be able to give you a direct proof, that the Apostles neither comforted themselves, nor encouraged others with the delightful hope of seeing their master coming again into the world. It is evident then, that St. John, who survived all the other Apostles, could not have had any such expectation; since in the Book of the Revelation, the future events of the Christian church, which were not to take place, many of them, till a long series of years after his death, and some of which have not yet been accomplished, are there minutely described. St. Peter, in like manner, strongly intimates, that the day of the Lord might be said to be at hand, though it was at the distance of a thousand years or more; for in replying to the taunt, of those who did then, or should in future ask, *Where is the promise of his coming?* he says, *Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years,*
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and a thousand years as one day: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. And he speaks of putting off his tabernacle, as the Lord had shewed him; and of his endeavour, that the Christians after his decease, might be able to have these things in remembrance: So that it is past a doubt, he could not be of opinion, that the Lord would come in his time. As to St. Paul, upon a partial view of whose writings the doctrine concerning the speedy coming of Christ is principally founded; it is manifest, that he was conscious he should not live to see it, notwithstanding the expression before mentioned, *we which are alive*; for he foretels his own death in express terms—*the time of my departure is at hand*; and he speaks of his reward, not as immediately to be conferred on him; but as laid up, and reserved for him till some future day—*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.* There is moreover one passage in his writings, which is so express, and full to the purpose, that it will put the matter, I think, beyond all doubt; it occurs in his second Epistle

Epistle to the Thessalonians: They, it seems, had either by misinterpreting some parts of his former letter to them, or by the preaching of some, who had not the spirit of truth; by some means or other, they had been led to expect the speedy coming of Christ, and been greatly disturbed in mind upon that account: To remove this error, he writes to them in the following very solemn and affectionate manner; *We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand; let no man deceive you by any means.* He then goes on to describe a falling away, a great corruption of the Christian church, which was to happen before the day of the Lord: Now by this revelation of the man of sin, this mystery of iniquity, which is to be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, destroyed with the brightness of his coming, we have every reason to believe, is to be understood the past and present abominations of the church of Rome. How then can it be said of Paul, who clearly foresaw this corruption above seventeen hundred years ago, that

that he expected the coming of the Lord in his own day? Let us press, Sir, the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation, as closely as you please; but let us press it truly; and we may, perhaps, find reason from thence to receive, with less reluctance, a religion, which describes a corruption, the strangeness of which, had it not been foretold in unequivocal terms, might have amazed even a friend to Christianity.

I WILL produce you, Sir, a prophecy, which, the more closely you press it, the more reason you will have to believe, that the speedy coming of Christ could never have been *predicted* by the Apostles. Take it, as translated by Bishop Newton: *But the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall apostatize from the faith; giving heed to erroneous spirits, and doctrines concerning demons, through the hypocrisy of liars; having their conscience seared with a red hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.* — Here you have an express prophecy — the Spirit hath spoken it — that in the latter times — not immediately, but at some distant period — some should apostatize from the faith — some, who

who had been Christians, should in truth be so no longer — but should give heed to erroneous spirits, and doctrines concerning demons : — Press this expression closely, and you may, perhaps, discover in it the erroneous tenets, and the demon, or saint worship of the church of Rome ; — through the hypocrisy of liars : — You recognize, no doubt, the priesthood, and the martyrologists ; — having their conscience seared with a red hot iron : — Callous, indeed, must his conscience be, who trafficks in indulgences ; — forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats : — This language needs no pressing ; it discovers, at once, the unhappy votaries of monastic life, and the mortal sin of eating flesh on fast days.

IF, notwithstanding what has been said, you should still be of opinion, that the Apostles expected Christ would come in their time ; it will not follow, that this their error ought in any wise to diminish their authority as preachers of the gospel. I am sensible, this position may alarm even some well-wishers to Christianity ; and supply it's enemies with, what they will think, an irrefragable argument : The Apostles, they will say,

say, were inspired with the spirit of truth; and yet they fell into a gross mistake, concerning a matter of great importance; how is this to be reconciled? Perhaps, in the following manner: When the time of our Saviour's ministry was nearly at an end, he thought proper to raise the spirits of his disciples, who were quite cast down with what he had told them about his design of leaving them; by promising, that he would send to them the holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth; who should teach them all things, and lead them into all truth. And we know, that this his promise was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, when they were all filled with the holy Ghost; and we know farther, that from that time forward, they were enabled to speak with tongues, to work miracles, to preach the word with power, and to comprehend the mystery of the new dispensation, which was committed unto them. But we have no reason from hence to conclude, that they were immediately inspired with the apprehension of whatever might be known; that they became acquainted with all kinds of truth: They were undoubtedly led into such truths, as it was necessary for them to know,
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in order to their converting the world to Christianity; but in other things, they were probably left to the exercise of their understandings, as other men usually are. But surely they might be proper witnesses of the life and resurrection of Christ, though they were not acquainted with every thing, which might have been known; though in particular, they were ignorant of the precise time, when our Lord would come to judge the world. It can be no impeachment, either of their integrity as men, or their ability as historians, or their honesty as preachers of the gospel, that they were unacquainted with what had never been revealed to them; that they followed their own understandings, where they had no better light to guide them; speaking from conjecture, when they could not speak from certainty; of themselves, when they had no commandment of the Lord. They knew but in part, and they prophesied but in part; and concerning this particular point, Jesus himself had told them, just as he was about finally to leave them, that it was not for them to *know the times and the seasons, which the Father had put in his own power*. Nor is it to be wondered at, that the Apostles were left in
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a state of uncertainty, concerning the time in which Christ should appear; since Beings, far more exalted and more highly favoured of heaven than they, were under an equal degree of ignorance; *Of that day, says our Saviour, and of that hour, knoweth no one; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.* I am afraid, Sir, I have tired you with scripture quotations; but if I have been fortunate enough to convince you, either that the speedy coming of Christ was never expected, much less *predicted*, by the Apostles; or that their mistake in that particular expectation, can in no degree diminish the general weight of their testimony as historians, I shall not be sorry for the *ennui* I may have occasioned you.

THE doctrine of the Millennium, is the second of the circumstances which you produce, as giving weight to that of a future state; and you represent this doctrine as having been “carefully inculcated by a succession of the fathers, from Justin Martyr and Irenæus down to Lactantius;” and observe, that when “the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support

port was laid aside;" and in the notes, you refer us, as a proof of what you advance, to "Irenæus, the disciple of Papias, who had seen the Apostle St. John," and to the second Dialogue of Justin with Trypho.

I WISH, Sir, you had turned to Eusebius, for the character of this Papias, who had seen the Apostle St. John; you would there have found him represented as little better than a credulous old woman; very averse from reading, but mightily given to picking up stories and traditions next to fabulous; amongst which Eusebius reckons this of the Millennium one. Nor is it, I apprehend, quite certain, that Papias ever saw, much less discoursed, as seems to be insinuated, with the Apostle St. John. Eusebius thinks rather, that it was John the presbyter he had seen. But what if he had seen the Apostle himself? many a weak-headed man had undoubtedly seen him, as well as Papias; and it would be hard indeed upon Christians, if they were compelled to receive as apostolical traditions, the wild reveries of antient enthusiasm, or such crude conceptions of ignorant fanaticism, as nothing but the rust of antiquity can render venerable.

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As to the works of Justin, the very Dialogue you refer to contains a proof, that the doctrine of the Millennium had not, even in his time, the universal reception you have supposed; but that many Christians of pure and pious principles rejected it. I wonder, how this passage escaped you; but it may be, that you followed Tillotson, who himself followed Mede, and read in the original α , instead of $\alpha\upsilon$; and thus unwarily violated the idiom of the language, the sense of the context, and the authority of the best editions*. In the note you observe, that it is unnecessary for you to mention all the intermediate fathers between Justin and Lactantius, as the fact, you say, is not disputed. In a man, who has read so many books,

* Justin, in answering the question proposed by Trypho, Whether the Christians believed the doctrine of the Millennium, says, *ὁμολογήσατε ἡμεῖς καὶ πρότεροι, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμεῖς καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ ταῦτα φρονοῦμεν, ὡς καὶ παλαιὸς ἐπιστάθι, τὸ τοῦ γνησομένου. Πολλοὺς δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν τῆς ΚΑΘΑΡΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΣΕΒΟΥΣ ὄντων Χριστιανῶν ΓΝΩΜΗΣ τὸ τοῦ μὴ γινεσθαι σοὶ.* The note subjoined to this passage out of Justin, in Thirlby's Ed. an. 1722. is, [*Πολλοὺς δ' αὖ καὶ τῶν τῆς καθαρᾶς*] Medus (quem sequitur Tillotsonus, Reg. Fidei per. iii. sect. 9. p. 756. & seq.) legit *τῶν ἢ τῆς καθαρᾶς*. Vehementer errant viri præclari.

And in Jebb's Edit. an. 1719. we have the following note: *Doctrina itaque de Millennio, neque erat universalis ecclesiæ traditio, nec opinio de fide recepta, &c.*

and to so good a purpose, he must be captious indeed, who cannot excuse small mistakes: That unprejudiced regard to truth, however, which is the great characteristic of every distinguished historian, will, I am persuaded, make you thank me for recalling to your memory, that Origen, the most learned of all the fathers, and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, usually for his immense erudition surnamed the Great, were both of them prior to Lactantius, and both of them impugners of the Millennium doctrine. Look, Sir, into Mosheim, or almost any writer of ecclesiastical history; and you will find the opposition of Origen and Dionysius to this system particularly noticed: Look into so common an author as Whitby; and in his learned treatise upon this subject, you will find he has well proved these two propositions; first, that this opinion of the Millennium was never generally received in the church of Christ: secondly, that there is no just ground to think it was derived from the Apostles. From hence, I think, we may conclude, that this Millennium doctrine, (which, by the bye, though it be new modelled, is not yet thrown aside) could not have been any very serviceable scaffold,
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in the erection of that mighty edifice, which has crushed by the weight of it's materials, and debased by the elegance of it's structure, the stateliest temples of heathen superstition. With these remarks, I take leave of the Millennium; just observing, that your third circumstance, the general conflagration, seems to be effectually included in your first, the speedy coming of Christ.

I am, &c.

LETTER THIRD.

SIR,

YOU esteem “the miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church,” as the third of the secondary causes of the rapid growth of Christianity; I should be willing to account the miracles, not merely ascribed to the primitive church, but really performed by the Apostles, as the one great primary cause of the conversion of the Gentiles. But waving this consideration, let us see whether the miraculous powers, which you ascribe to the primitive church, were in any eminent degree calculated to spread the belief of Christianity amongst a great, and an enlightened people.

THEY consisted, you tell us, “of divine inspirations, conveyed sometimes in the form of a sleeping, sometimes of a waking vision; and were liberally bestowed on all ranks of the
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the faithful, on women as on elders, on boys as well as upon Bishops." "The design of these visions, you say, was for the most part either to disclose the future history, or to guide the present administration of the church." "You speak of the expulsion of Demons as an ordinary triumph of religion, usually performed in a public manner; and when the patient was relieved by the skill or the power of the Exorcist, the vanquished Demon was heard to confess, that he was one of the fabled gods of antiquity, who had impiously usurped the adoration of mankind;" and you represent even the miracle of the resurrection of the dead, as frequently performed on necessary occasions.—Cast your eye, Sir, upon the church of Rome, and ask yourself, (I put the question to your heart, and beg you will consult that for an answer; ask yourself,) whether her absurd pretensions to that very kind of miraculous powers, you have here displayed as operating to the increase of Christianity, have not converted half her numbers to Protestantism, and the other half to Infidelity? Neither the sword of the civil magistrate, nor the possession of the keys of heaven, nor the terrors of her spiritual

tual thunder, have been able to keep within her Pale, even those who have been bred up in her faith; how then should you think, that the very cause, which hath almost extinguished Christianity amongst Christians, should have established it amongst Pagans? I beg, I may not be misunderstood; I do not take upon me to say, that all the miracles recorded in the history of the primitive church after the apostolical age, were forgeries; it is foreign to the present purpose to deliver any opinion upon that subject; but I do beg leave to insist upon this, that such of them as were forgeries, must in that learned age, by their easy detection, have rather impeded, than accelerated the progress of Christianity: And it appears very probable to me, that nothing but the recent prevailing evidence, of real, unquestioned, apostolical miracles, could have secured the infant church from being destroyed by those, which were falsely ascribed to it.

It is not every man, who can nicely separate the corruptions of religion from religion itself; nor justly apportion the degrees of credit due to the diversities of evidence; and those, who have ability for the task, are usually

usually ready enough to emancipate themselves from gospel restraints, (which thwart the propensities of sense, check the ebullitions of passion, and combat the prejudices of the world at every turn,) by blending it's native simplicity with the superstitions, which have been derived from it. No argument so well suited to the indolence or the immorality of mankind, as that priests of all ages and religions are the same; we see the pretensions of the Romish priesthood to miraculous powers, and we know them to be false; we are conscious, that they at least must sacrifice their integrity to their interest, or their ambition; and being persuaded, that there is a great sameness in the passions of mankind, and in their incentives to action; and knowing, that the history of past ages is abundantly stored with similar claims to supernatural authority; we traverse back in imagination the most distant regions of antiquity; and finding, from a superficial view, nothing to discriminate one set of men, or one period of time from another; we hastily conclude, that all revealed religion is a cheat, and that the miracles attributed to the Apostles themselves, are supported by no better testimony, nor more

worthy our attention, than the prodigies of Pagan story, or the lying wonders of Papal artifice. I have no intention in this place, to enlarge upon the many circumstances, by which a candid inquirer after truth might be enabled to distinguish a pointed difference between the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, and the tricks of antient or modern superstition. One observation I would just suggest to you upon the subject; the miracles recorded in the old and new Testament, are so intimately united with the narration of common events, and the ordinary transactions of life, that you cannot, as in profane history, separate the one from the other. My meaning will be illustrated by an instance; Tacitus and Suetonius have handed down to us an account of many great actions performed by Vespasian; amongst the rest, they inform us of his having wrought some miracles, of his having cured a lame man, and restored sight to one that was blind. But what they tell us of these miracles, is so unconnected with every thing that goes before and after, that you may reject the relation of them without injuring, in any degree, the consistency of the narration of the other circumstances of his life;

life: On the other hand, if you reject the relation of the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus Christ, you must necessarily reject the account of his whole life, and of several transactions, concerning which we have the undoubted testimony of other writers besides the Evangelists. But if this argument should not strike you, perhaps the following observation may tend to remove a little of the prejudice, usually conceived against gospel miracles, by men of lively imaginations, from the gross forgeries attributed to the first ages of the church.

THE phænomena of physicks are sometimes happily illustrated by an Hypothesis; and the most recondite truths of Mathematical science not unfrequently investigated, from an absurd position; what if we should try the same method of arguing in the case before us. Let us suppose then, that a new revelation was to be promulged to mankind, and that twelve unlearned and unfriended men, inhabitants of any country most odious and despicable in the eyes of Europe, should by the power of God be endowed with the faculty of speaking languages they had never learned, and performing works surpassing
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all human ability; and that being strongly impressed with a particular truth, which they were commissioned to promulgate, they should travel not only through the barbarous regions of Africa, but through all the learned and polished states of Europe; preaching every where with unremitting fidelity a new religion, working stupendous miracles in attestation of their mission, and communicating to their first converts (as a seal of their conversion) a variety of spiritual gifts; does it appear probable to you, that after the death of these men, and probably after the deaths of most of their immediate successors, who had been zealously attached to the faith they had seen so miraculously confirmed; that none would ever attempt to impose upon the credulous or the ignorant, by a fictitious claim to supernatural powers? would none of them aspire to the gift of tongues? would none of them mistake phrensy for illumination, and the delusions of a heated brain for the impulses of the spirit? would none undertake to cure inveterate disorders, to expel Demons, or to raise the dead? As far as I can apprehend, we ought, from such a position, to deduce, by every rule of probable reasoning, the precise

the conclusion, which was in fact verified in the case of the Apostles; every species of miracles, which heaven had enabled the first preachers to perform, would be counterfeited, either from misguided zeal, or interested cunning; either through the imbecility, or the iniquity of mankind; and we might just as reasonably conclude, that there never was any piety, charity, or chastity in the world, from seeing such plenty of pretenders to these virtues, as that there never were any real miracles performed, from considering the great store of those which have been forged.

BUT, I know not how it has happened, there are many in the present age (I am far from including you, Sir, in the number) whose prejudices against all miraculous events have arisen to that height, that it appears to them utterly impossible for any human testimony, however great, to establish their credibility. I beg pardon for styling their reasoning, prejudice; I have no design to give offence by that word; they may, with equal right, throw the same imputation upon mine; and I think it just as illiberal in Divines, to attribute the scepticism

cism of every Deist to wilful infidelity; as it is in the Deists, to refer the faith of every Divine to professional biases. I have not had so little intercourse with mankind, nor shunned so much the delightful freedom of social converse, as to be ignorant, that there are many men of upright morals and good understandings, to whom, as you express it, "a latent and even involuntary scepticism adheres;" and who would be glad to be persuaded to be Christians: And how severe soever some men may be in their judgements concerning one another; yet we Christians at least, hope, and believe, that the great Judge of all will make allowance for "our habits of study and reflection," for various circumstances, the efficacy of which in giving a particular bent to the understandings of men, we can neither comprehend, nor estimate. For the sake of such men, if such should ever be induced to throw an hour away in the perusal of these letters, suffer me to step for a moment out of my way, whilst I hazard an observation or two upon the subject.

KNOWLEDGE is rightly divided by Mr. Locke into intuitive, sensitive, and demonstrative;

strative; it is clear, that a past miracle can neither be the object of sense, nor of intuition, nor consequently of demonstration; we cannot then, philosophically speaking, be said to know, that a miracle has ever been performed. But in all the great concerns of life, we are influenced by probability, rather than knowledge: And of probability, the same great author establishes two foundations; a conformity to our own experience, and the testimony of others. Now it is contended, that by the opposition of these two principles, probability is destroyed; or, in other terms, that human testimony can never influence the mind to assent to a proposition repugnant to uniform experience. — Whose experience do you mean? you will not say, your own; for the experience of an individual reaches but a little way; and no doubt, you daily assent to a thousand truths in politicks, in physicks, and in the business of common life, which you have never seen verified by experience. — You will not produce the experience of your friends; for that can extend itself but a little way, beyond your own. — But by uniform experience, I conceive,

ceive, you are desirous of understanding the experience of all ages and nations since the foundation of the world. I answer, first; how is it, that you become acquainted with the experience of all ages and nations? You will reply, from history. — Be it so: — Peruse then, by far the most antient records of antiquity; and if you find no mention of miracles in them, I give up the point. Yes; — but every thing related therein respecting miracles, is to be reckoned fabulous. — Why? — Because miracles contradict the experience of all ages and nations. Do you not perceive, Sir, that you beg the very question in debate? for we affirm, that the great and learned nation of Egypt, that the Heathen inhabiting the land of Canaan, that the numerous people of the Jews, and the nations, which, for ages, surrounded them, have all had great experience of miracles. You cannot otherways obviate this conclusion, than by questioning the authenticity of that book, concerning which, Newton, when he was writing his Commentary on Daniel, expressed himself to the person *, from whom I had the anecdote, and which

* Dr. Smith, late Master of Trinity College.

deserves

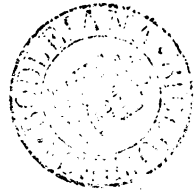
deserves not to be lost; "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible, than in any profane history whatsoever."

HOWEVER, I mean not to press you with the argument *ad verecundiam*; it is needless to solicit your modesty, when it may be possible, perhaps, to make an impression upon your judgment: I answer therefore, in the second place, that the admission of the principle, by which you reject miracles, will lead us into absurdity. The laws of gravitation, are the most obvious of all the laws of nature; every person in every part of the globe, must of necessity have had experience of them: There was a time, when no one was acquainted with the laws of magnetism; these suspend in many instances the laws of gravity; nor can I see, upon the principle in question, how the rest of mankind could have credited the testimony of their first discoverer; and yet to have rejected it; would have been to reject the truth. But that a piece of iron should ascend gradually from the earth, and fly at last with an increasing rapidity through the air; and attaching itself to another piece of iron, or to a particular species of iron ore, should

should remain suspended in opposition to the action of its gravity, is consonant to the laws of nature. — I grant it; but there was a time, when it was contrary, I say not to the laws of nature, but to the uniform experience of all preceding ages and countries; and at that particular point of time, the testimony of an individual, or of a dozen individuals, who should have reported themselves eye witnesses of such a fact, ought, according to your argumentation, to have been received as fabulous. And what are those laws of nature, which, you think, can never be suspended? are they not different to different men, according to the diversities of their comprehension and knowledge? and if any one of them, (that, for instance, which rules the operations of magnetism or electricity,) should have been known to you or to me alone, whilst all the rest of the world were unacquainted with it; the effects of it would have been new, and unheard of in the annals, and contrary to the experience of mankind; and therefore ought not, in your opinion, to have been believed. Nor do I understand, what difference, as to credibility, there could be, between the effects of
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such an unknown law of nature and a miracle; for it is a matter of no moment, in that view, whether the suspension of the known laws of nature be effected; that is, whether a miracle be performed, by the mediation of other laws that are unknown, or by the ministry of a person divinely commissioned; since it is impossible for us to be certain, that it is contradictory to the constitution of the universe, that the laws of nature, which appear to us general, should not be suspended, and their action overruled by others, still more general, though less known; that is, that miracles should not be performed before such a Being as Man, at those times, in those places, and under those circumstances, which God, in his universal providence, had preordained.

I am, &c.



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LETTER FOURTH.

S I R,

I READILY acknowledge the utility of your fourth cause, “the virtues of the first Christians,” as greatly conducing to the spreading their religion; but then you seem to quite mar the compliment you pay them, by representing their virtues, as proceeding either from their repentance for having been the most abandoned finners, or from the laudable desire of supporting the reputation of the society, in which they were engaged.

THAT repentance is the first step to virtue, is true enough; but I see no reason for supposing, according to the calumnies of Celsus and Julian, “that the Christians allured into their party, men, who washed away in the waters of baptism the guilt, for which the temples of the gods refused

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to grant them any expiation." The Apostles, Sir, did not, like Romulus, open an asylum for debtors, thieves, and murderers; for they had not the same sturdy means of securing their adherents from the grasp of civil power; they did not persuade them to abandon the temples of the gods, because they could there obtain no expiation for their guilt; but because every degree of guilt was expiated in them with too great facility; and every vice practised, not only without remorse of private conscience, but with the powerful sanction of public approbation.

"AFTER the example, you say, of their Divine Master, the missionaries of the gospel addressed themselves to men, and especially to women, oppressed by the consciousness, and very often by the effects of their vices." — This, Sir, I really think, is not a fair representation of the matter; it may catch the applause of the unlearned, embolden many a stripling to cast off for ever the sweet blush of modesty, confirm many a dissolute veteran in the practice of his impure habits, and suggest great occasion of merriment and wanton mockery to the flagitious

gigious of every denomination and every age; but still it will want that foundation of truth, which alone can recommend it to the serious and judicious. The Apostles, Sir, were not like the Italian *Fratricelli* of the thirteenth, nor the French *Turlupins* of the fourteenth century; in all the dirt that has been raked up against Christianity, even by the worst of it's enemies, not a speck of that kind have they been able to fix, either upon the Apostles, or their Divine Master. The gospel of Jesus Christ, Sir, was not preached in single houses, or obscure villages, not in subterraneous caves and impure brothels, not in lazars and in prisons; but in the synagogues and in the temples, in the streets and in the market-places of the great capitals of the Roman provinces; in Jerusalem, in Corinth, and in Antioch, in Athens, in Ephesus, and in Rome. Nor do I any where find, that it's missionaries were ordered particularly to address themselves to the shameless women you mention; I do indeed find the direct contrary; for they were ordered to turn away from, to have no fellowship or intercourse with such, as were wont to creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away
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with divers lusts. And what if a few women, who had either been seduced by their passions, or had fallen victims to the licentious manners of their age, should be found amongst those, who were most ready to receive a religion, that forbid all impurity? I do not apprehend, that this circumstance ought to bring an insinuation of discredit, either upon the sex, or upon those who wrought their reformation.

THAT the majority of the first converts to Christianity, were of an inferior condition in life, may readily be allowed; and you yourself have in another place given a good reason for it; those who are distinguished by riches, honours, or knowledge, being so very inconsiderable in number, when compared with the bulk of mankind; But though not many mighty, not many noble, were called; yet some mighty, and some noble, some of as great reputation as any of the age in which they lived, were attached to the Christian faith. Short indeed are the accounts, which have been transmitted to us, of the first propagating of Christianity; yet even in these, we meet with the names of many, who would have

done credit to any cause; I will not pretend to enumerate them all, a few of them will be sufficient to make you recollect, that there were, at least, some converts to Christianity, both from among the Jews and the Gentiles, whose lives were not stained with inexpressible crimes. Amongst these we reckon Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, Joseph of Arimathea, a man of fortune and a counsellor, a nobleman and a centurion of Capernaum, Jairus, Crispus, Sosthenes, rulers of synagogues, Apollos an eloquent and learned man, Zenas a Jewish lawyer, the treasurer of Candace queen of Æthiopia, Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, Dionysius a member of the Areopagus at Athens, and Sergius Paulus, a man of proconsular or prætorian authority, of whom it may be remarked, that if he resigned his high and lucrative office in consequence of his turning Christian, it is a strong presumption in it's favour; if he retained it, we may conclude, that the profession of Christianity was not so utterly incompatible with the discharge of the offices of civil life, as you sometimes represent it. This Catalogue of men of rank, fortune, and knowledge, who embraced Christianity, might,

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was it necessary, be much enlarged; and probably another conversation with St. Paul would have enabled us to grace it with the names of Festus, and king Agrippa himself; not that the writers of the Books of the new Testament seem to have been at all solicitous, in mentioning the great or the learned, who were converted to the faith; had that been part of their design, they would, in the true stile of imposters, have kept out of sight the publicans and sinners, the tanners and the tentmakers with whom they conversed and dwelt; and introduced to our notice none but those, who had been *brought up with Herod, or the chief men of Asia* — whom they had the honour to number amongst their friends.

THAT the Primitive Christians took great care to have an un sullied reputation, by abstaining from the commission of whatever might tend to pollute it, is easily admitted; but we do not so easily grant, that this care is a “circumstance, which usually attends small assemblies of men, when they separate themselves from the body of a nation, or the religion to which they belong.” It did not attend the Nicolaitanes, the Simonians,

the Menandrians, and the Carpocratians in the first ages of the church, of which you are speaking; and it cannot be unknown to you, Sir, that the scandalous vices of these very early Sectaries, brought a general and undistinguished censure upon the Christian name; and so far from promoting the increase of the church, excited in the minds of the Pagans an abhorrence of whatever respected it; it cannot be unknown to you, Sir, that several Sectaries both at home and abroad might be mentioned, who have departed from the religion to which they belonged; and which, unhappily for themselves and the community, have taken as little care to preserve their reputation unspotted, as those of the first and second centuries. If then the first Christians did take the care you mention, (and I am wholly of your opinion in that point;) their solicitude might as candidly, perhaps, and as reasonably be derived from a sense of their duty, and an honest endeavour to discharge it, as from the mere desire of increasing the honour of their confraternity by the illustrious integrity of it's members.

You are eloquent in describing the austere
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morality of the primitive Christians, as adverse to the propensities of sense, and abhorrent from all the innocent pleasures and amusements of life; and you enlarge, with a studied minuteness, upon their censures of luxury, and their sentiments concerning marriage and Chastity; — but in this circumstantial enumeration of their errors or their faults, (which I am under no necessity of denying or excusing,) you seem to forget the very purpose, for which you profess to have introduced the mention of them; for the picture you have drawn is so hideous, and the colouring so dismal, that instead of alluring to a closer inspection, it must have made every man of pleasure or of sense turn from it with horror or disgust; and so far from contributing to the rapid growth of Christianity by the austerity of their manners, it must be a wonder to any one, how the first Christians ever made a single convert. — It was first objected by Celsus, that Christianity was a mean religion, inculcating such a pusillanimity and patience under affronts, such a contempt of riches and worldly honours, as must weaken the nerves of civil government, and expose a society of Christians to the prey of the first invaders.

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This objection has been repeated by Bayle; and though fully answered by Bernard and others, it is still the favourite theme of every Esprit fort of our own age: Even you, Sir, think the aversion of Christians to the business of war and government, “ a criminal disregard to the publick welfare.” To all that has been said upon this subject, it may with justice, I think, be answered, that Christianity troubles not itself with ordering the constitutions of civil societies; but levels the weight of all its influence at the hearts of the individuals which compose them; and as Origen said to Celsus, was every individual in every nation a gospel Christian, there would be neither internal injustice, nor external war; there would be none of those passions, which imbitter the intercourses of civil life, and desolate the globe. What reproach then can it be to a religion, that it inculcates doctrines, which, if universally practised, would introduce universal tranquillity, and the most exalted happiness amongst mankind?

It must proceed from a total misapprehension of the design of the Christian dispensation, or from a very ignorant interpretation

pretation of the particular injunctions, forbidding us to make riches or honours a primary pursuit, or the prompt gratification of revenge a first principle of action, to infer,—that an individual Christian is obliged by his religion to offer his throat to an assassin, and his property to the first plunderer; or that a society of Christians may not repel, in the best manner they are able, the unjust assaults of hostile invasion.

I KNOW of no precepts in the gospel, which debar a man from the possession of domestic comforts, or deaden the activity of his private friendships, or prohibit the exertion of his utmost ability in the service of the public; the—*nisi quietum nihil beatum*—is no part of the Christian's Creed; his virtue, is an active virtue; and we justly refer to the school of Epicurus, the doctrines concerning abstinence from marriage, from the cultivation of friendship, from the management of public affairs, as suited to that selfish indolence, which was the favourite tenet of his philosophy.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER FIFTH.

S I R,

“**T**HE union and the discipline of the Christian church,” or, as you are pleased to stile it, of the Christian republic, is the last of the five secondary causes, to which you have referred the rapid and extensive spread of Christianity. It must be acknowledged, that union essentially contributes to the strength of every association, civil, military, and religious; but unfortunately for your argument, and much to the reproach of Christians, nothing has been more wanting amongst them, from the apostolic age to our own, than union. *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ,* are expressions of disunion, which we meet with in the earliest period of church history; and we cannot look into the writings of any, either friend or foe to Christianity, but we find the one of them
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lamenting; and the other exulting in an immense catalogue of sectaries; and both of them thereby furnishing us with great reason to believe, that the divisions with respect to doctrine, worship, and discipline, which have ever subsisted in the church, must have greatly tended to hurt the credit of Christianity, and to alienate the minds of the Gentiles from the reception of such a various and discordant faith.

I READILY grant, that there was a certain community of doctrine, an intercourse of hospitality, and a confederacy of discipline established amongst the individuals of every church; so that none could be admitted into any assembly of Christians, without undergoing a previous examination into his manner of life *, (which shews by the bye, that every reprobate could not, as the fit seized him, or his interest induced him, become a Christian) and without protesting in the most solemn manner, that he would neither be guilty of murder, nor adultery,

* Nonnulli præpositi sunt, qui in vitam et mores eorum, qui admittuntur, inquirant, ut non concessa facientes candidatos religionis arceant a suis conventibus. Orig. Con. Cel. Lib. 2.

nor theft, nor perfidy; and it may be granted also, that those who broke this compact, were ejected by common consent from the confraternity into which they had been admitted; it may be further granted, that this confederacy extended itself to independent churches; and that those who had, for their immoralities, been excluded from Christian community in any one church, were rarely, if ever admitted to it by another; just as a member, who has been expelled any one College in an University, is generally thought unworthy of being admitted by any other: But it is not admitted, that this severity and this union of discipline could ever have induced the Pagans to forsake the gods of their country, and to expose themselves to the contemptuous hatred of their neighbours, and to all the severities of persecution exercised, with unrelenting barbarity, against the Christians.

THE account you give of the origin and progress of episcopal jurisdiction, of the pre-eminence of the Metropolitan churches, and of the ambition of the Roman Pontiff, I believe to be in general accurate and true; and I am not in the least surpris'd at the bitter-

bitterness, which now and then escapes you in treating this subject; for, to see the most benign religion that imagination can form, becoming an instrument of oppression; and the most humble one administering to the pride, the avarice, and the ambition of those, who wished to be considered as its guardians, and who avowed themselves its professors, would extort a censure from men more attached probably to church authority than yourself: Not that I think it, either a very candid, or a very useful undertaking, to be solely and industriously engaged in portraying the characters of the professors of Christianity in the worst colours; it is not candid, because “the great law of impartiality, which obliges an historian to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the gospel,” obliges him also not to conceal, or to pass over with niggard and reluctant mention, the illustrious virtues of those, who gave up fortune and fame, all their comforts, and all their hopes in this life, nay, life itself, rather than violate any one of the precepts of that gospel, which, from the testimony of inspired teachers, they conceived they had good reason to believe; it is not useful, be-
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cause "to a careless observer," (that is, to the generality of mankind) "*their* faults may seem to cast a shade on the faith, which they professed;" and may really infect the minds of the young and unlearned especially, with prejudices against a religion, upon their rational reception or rejection of which, a matter of the utmost importance may (believe me, Sir, it may, for ought you or any person else can prove to the contrary,) entirely depend. It is an easy matter to amuse ourselves and others with the immoralities of priests, and the ambition of prelates, with the absurd virulence of synods and councils, with the ridiculous doctrines, which visionary enthusiasts or interested churchmen have sanctified with the name of Christian; but a display of ingenuity, or erudition upon such subjects is much misplaced; since it excites almost in every person, an unavoidable suspicion of the purity of the source itself, from which such polluted streams have been derived. Do not mistake my meaning; I am far from wishing, that the clergy should be looked up to with a blind reverence, or their imperfections screened by the sanctity of their function, from the animadversion of the world:

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Quite the contrary; their conduct, I am of opinion, ought to be more nicely scrutinized, and their deviation from the rectitude of the gospel, more severely censured, than that of other men; but great care should be taken, not to represent *their* vices, or *their* indiscretions, as originating in the principles of their religion. Do not mistake me; I am not here begging quarter for Christianity; or contending, that even the principles of our religion should be received with implicit faith; or that every objection to Christianity should be stifled, by a representation of the mischief it might do, if publicly promulged; on the contrary, we invite, nay, we challenge you to a direct and liberal attack; though oblique glances, and disingenuous insinuations, we are willing to avoid; well knowing, that the character of our religion, like that of an honest man, is defended with greater difficulty against the suggestions of ridicule, and the secret malignity of pretended friends, than against positive accusations, and the avowed malice of open enemies.

In your account of the primitive church, you set forth, that “the want of discipline

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and human learning, was supplied by the occasional assistance of the prophets; who were called to that function, without distinction of age, of sex, or of natural abilities." — That the gift of prophecy was one of the spiritual gifts, by which some of the first Christians were enabled to cooperate with the Apostles, in the general design of preaching the Gospel; and that this gift, or rather, as Mr. Locke thinks, the gift of tongues, (by the ostentation of which, many of them were prompted to speak in their assemblies at the same time,) was the occasion of some disorder in the church of Corinth, which required the interposition of the Apostle to compose, is confessed on all hands. But if you mean, that the prophets were ever the sole pastors of the faithful; or that no provision was made by the Apostles for the good government and edification of the church, except what might be accidentally derived from the occasional assistance of the prophets, you are much mistaken; and have undoubtedly forgot, what is said of Paul and Barnabas having ordained elders in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch; and of Paul's commission to Titus, whom he had left in Crete, to ordain elders in every

every city; and of his instructions both to him and Timothy, concerning the qualifications of those, whom they were to appoint bishops: One of which was, that a bishop should be able by sound doctrine, to exhort and to convince the gain-sayer; nor is it said, that this sound doctrine was to be communicated to the bishop by prophecy, or that all persons, without distinction, might be called to that office; but a bishop was *to be able to teach*, not what he had learned by prophecy, but what Paul had publicly preached; *the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* And in every place almost, where prophets are mentioned, they are joined with Apostles and teachers, and other ministers of the gospel; so that there is no reason for your representing them as a distinct order of men, who were by their occasional assistance to supply the want of discipline and human learning in the church. It would be taking too large a field, to inquire, whether the prophets, you speak of, were endowed with ordinary or extraordinary gifts; whether they always spoke by the immediate impulse of the Spirit, or ac-

ording to *the analogy of faith*; whether their gift consisted in the foretelling of future events, or in the interpreting of scripture to the edification and exhortation and comfort of the church, or in both: I will content myself with observing, that he will judge very improperly concerning the prophets of the apostolic church, who takes his idea of their office or importance, from your description of them.

IN speaking of the community of goods, which, you say, was adopted for a short time in the primitive church, you hold as inconclusive the arguments of Mosheim; who has endeavoured to prove, that it was a community, quite different from that recommended by Pythagoras or Plato; consisting principally in a common use, derived from an unbounded liberality, which induced the opulent to share their riches with their indigent brethren; there have been others, as well as Mosheim, who have entertained this opinion; and it is not quite so indefensible, as you represent it; but whether it be reasonable or absurd, need not now be examined: It is far more necessary to take notice of an expression, which you
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have used, and which may be apt to mislead unwary readers into a very injurious suspicion, concerning the integrity of the Apostles. In process of time you observe, “the converts, who embraced the new religion, were permitted to retain the possession of their patrimony.” — This expression, *permitted to retain*, in ordinary acceptation, implies an antecedent obligation to part with: Now, Sir, I have not the shadow of a doubt in affirming, that we have no account in scripture of any such obligation being imposed upon the converts to Christianity, either by Christ himself, or by his Apostles, or by any other authority: Nay, in the very place, where this community of goods is treated of, there is an express proof, (I know not how your impartiality has happened to overlook it,) to the contrary. When Peter was about to inflict an exemplary punishment upon Ananias (not for keeping back a part of the price, as some men are fond of representing it, but) for his lying and hypocrisy, in offering a part of the price of his land, as the whole of it; he said to him, *whilst it remained (unsold,) was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* From this account it is evident,

that Ananias was under no obligation to part with his patrimony; and after he had parted with it, the price was in his own power; the Apostle would have *permitted him to retain* the whole of it, if he had thought fit; though he would not permit his prevarication to go unpunished.

You have remarked, that “the feasts of love, the agapæ, as they were called, constituted a very pleasing and essential part of public worship.”—Lest any one should from hence be led to suspect, that these feasts of love, this pleasing part of the public worship of the primitive church, resembled the unhallowed meetings of some impure sectaries of our own times, I will take the liberty to add to your account, a short explication of the nature of these agapæ. Tertullian, in the 39th chapter of his Apology, has done it to my hands. The nature of our supper, says he, is indicated by its name; it is called by a word, which, in the Greek language, signifies love. We are not anxious about the expence of the entertainment; since we look upon that as gain, which is expended with a pious purpose, in the relief and refreshment of all our indigent.

gent. — The occasion of our entertainment being so honourable, you may judge of the manner of it's being conducted; it consists in the discharge of religious duties; it admits nothing vile, nothing immodest. Before we sit down, prayer is made to God. The hungry eat as much as they desire, and every one drinks as much as can be useful to sober men. We so feast, as men, who have their minds impressed with the idea of spending the night in the worship of God; we so converse, as men, who are conscious that the Lord heareth them, &c. Perhaps you may object to this testimony, in favour of the innocence of Christian meetings, as liable to partiality, because it is the testimony of a Christian; and you may, perhaps, be able to pick out from the writings of this Christian, something that looks like a contradiction of this account: However, I will rest the matter upon this testimony for the present; forbearing to quote any other Christian writer upon the subject, as I shall in a future letter, produce you a testimony, superior to every objection. You speak too of the *agapæ*, as an essential part of the public worship; this is not according to your usual accuracy; for, had they been

essential, the edict of an heathen magistrate would not have been able to put a stop to them; yet Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, expressly says, that the Christians left them off, upon his publishing an edict prohibiting assemblies; and we know, that in the council of Carthage, in the fourth century, on account of the abuses which attended them, they began to be interdicted, and ceased almost universally in the fifth.

I HAVE but two observations to make upon what you have advanced, concerning the severity of ecclesiastical penance; the first is, that even you yourself do not deduce it's institution from the scripture; but from the power, which every voluntary society has over it's own members; and therefore, however extravagant, or however absurd; however opposite to the attributes of a commiserating God, or the feelings of a fallible man, it may be thought; or upon whatever trivial occasion, such as that, you mention, of calumniating a Bishop, a Presbyter, or even a Deacon, it may have been inflicted; Christ and his Apostles are not answerable for it. The other is, that it was of all possible expedients, the least fitted to accom-

accomplish the end, for which you think it was introduced, the propagation of Christianity. The sight of a penitent humbled by a public confession, emaciated by fasting, clothed in sackcloth, prostrated at the door of the assembly, and imploring for years together the pardon of his offences, and a readmission into the bosom of the church, was a much more likely means of deterring the Pagans from Christian community, than the pious liberality you mention, was of alluring them into it. This pious liberality, Sir, would exhaust, even your elegant powers of description, before you could exhibit it in the amiable manner it deserves; it is derived from the *new commandment of loving one another*; and it has ever been the distinguishing characteristic of Christians, as opposed to every other denomination of men, Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans. In the times of the Apostles, and in the first ages of the church, it shewed itself in voluntary contributions for the relief of the poor and the persecuted, the infirm and the unfortunate; as soon as the church was permitted to have permanent possessions in land, and acquired the protection of the civil power, it exerted itself in the erection
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of hospitals of every kind; institutions these, of charity and humanity, which were forgotten in the laws of Solon and Lycurgus; and for even one example of which, you will, I believe, in vain explore the boasted annals of Pagan Rome. Indeed, Sir, you will think too injuriously of this liberality, if you look upon it's origin as superstitious; or upon it's application as an artifice of the priesthood, to seduce the indigent into the bosom of the church; it was the pure and uncorrupted fruit of genuine Christianity.

You are much *surprised*, and not a little *concerned*, that Tacitus and the younger Pliny, have spoken so slightly of the Christian system; and that Seneca and the elder Pliny, have not vouchsafed to mention it at all. This difficulty seems to have struck others, as well as yourself; and I might refer you to the conclusion of the second volume of Dr. Lardner's Collection of Ancient Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion, for full satisfaction in this point; but perhaps an observation or two, may be sufficient to diminish your surprise.

OBSCURE sectaries of upright morals, when they separate themselves from the religion of their country, do not speedily acquire the attention of men of Letters. The Historians are apprehensive of depreciating the dignity of their learned labour, and contaminating their splendid narration of illustrious events, by mixing with it a disgusting detail of religious combinations; and the philosophers are usually too deeply engaged in abstract science, or in exploring the infinite intricacy of natural appearances, to busy themselves with what they, perhaps hastily, esteem popular superstitions. Historians and philosophers, of no mean reputation, might be mentioned, I believe, who were the cotemporaries of Luther and the first reformers; and who have passed over in negligent or contemptuous silence, their daring and unpopular attempts to shake the stability of St. Peter's Chair. Opposition to the religion of a people, must become general, before it can deserve the notice of the civil magistrate; and till it does that, it will mostly be thought below the animadversion of distinguished writers. This remark is peculiarly applicable to the case in point. The first Christians, as Christ had fore-

foretold, were *bated of all men for his name's sake*: It was the name itself; not any vices adhering to the name, which Pliny punished; and they were every where held in exceeding contempt, till their numbers excited the apprehension of the ruling powers. The philosophers considered them as enthusiasts, and neglected them; the priests opposed them as innovators, and calumniated them; the great overlooked them, the learned despised them, and the curious alone, who examined into the foundation of their faith, believed them. But the negligence of some half dozen of writers, (most of them however bear incidental testimony to the truth of several facts respecting Christianity,) in not relating circumstantially the origin, the progress, and the pretensions of a new sect, is a very insufficient reason for questioning, either the evidence of the principles upon which it was built, or the supernatural power by which it was supported.

THE Roman historians, moreover, were not only culpably incurious concerning the Christians; but unpardonably ignorant of what concerned either them, or the Jews: I say, unpardonably ignorant; because the
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means of information were within their reach; the writings of Moses were every where to be had in Greek; and the works of Josephus were published, before Tacitus wrote his History; and yet, even Tacitus has fallen into great absurdity, and self-contradiction in his account of the Jews; and though Tertullian's zeal carried him much too far, when he called him *Mendaciorum loquacissimus*, yet one cannot help regretting the little pains he took to acquire proper information upon that subject. He derives the name of the Jews by a forced interpolation from mount Ida in Crete*; and he represents them as abhorring all kinds of images in public worship, and yet accuses them of having placed the image of an Afs in the holy of holies; and presently after he tells us, that Pompey, when he profaned the temple, found the sanctuary entirely empty. Similar inaccuracies might be noticed in Plutarch and other writers, who have spoken of the Jews; and you yourself have referred to an obscure passage in Suetonius, as offering a proof how

* Inclytum in Creta Idam montem, accolæ Idæos aucto-
 řa barbarum cognomento Judæos vocitari. Tac. Hist. L. 5.
 sub. Init.

strangely

strangely the Jews and Christians of Rome were confounded with each other. Why then should we think it remarkable, that a few celebrated writers, who looked upon the Christians as an obscure sect of the Jews; and upon the Jews as a barbarous and detested people, whose history was not worth the perusal; and who were moreover engaged in the relation of the great events, which either occasioned or accompanied the ruin of their eternal empire; why should we be surpris'd, that men occupi'd in such interesting subjects, and influenced by such inveterate prejudices, should have left us but short and imperfect descriptions of the Christian system?

“ BUT how shall we excuse, you say, the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world, to those evidences, which were presented by the hand of omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses?” —
 “ The laws of nature were perpetually suspended, for the benefit of the church: But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle.” — To their shame be it spoken, that they did so — “ and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study,

study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world." — To this objection, I answer in the first place, that we have no reason to believe, that miracles were performed, as often as philosophers deigned to give their attention to them; or that, at the period of time you allude to, the laws of nature were *perpetually* suspended, for the benefit of the church. It may be, that not one of the few heathen writers, whose books have escaped the ravages of time, was ever present, when a miracle was wrought; but will it follow, because Pliny, or Plutarch, or Galen, or Seneca, or Suetonius, or Tacitus, had never seen a miracle, that no miracles were ever performed? They indeed were learned, and observant men; and it may be a matter of surprise to us, that miracles so celebrated, as the friends of Christianity suppose the Christian ones to have been, should never have been mentioned by them though they had not seen them; and had an Adrian or a Vespasian been the authors of but a thousandth part of the miracles, you have ascribed to the primitive church, more than one probably of these very historians, philosophers as they were, would

would have adorned his history with the narration of them: For though they turned aside from the awful spectacle of the miracles of a poor despised Apostle — yet they beheld with exulting complacency, and have related with unsuspecting credulity, the ostentatious tricks of a Roman Emperor. It was not for want of faith in miraculous events, that these Sages neglected the Christian miracles, but for want of candour, and impartial examination.

I ANSWER in the second place, that in the Acts of the Apostles, we have an account of a great multitude of Pagans of every condition of life, who were so far from being inattentive to the evidences, which were presented by the hand of omnipotence to their senses, that they contemplated them with reverence and wonder; and forsaking the religion of their ancestors, and all the flattering hopes of worldly profit, reputation, and tranquillity, adhered with astonishing resolution to the profession of Christianity. From the conclusion of the Acts, till the time in which some of the Sages you mention flourished, is a very obscure part of church history; yet we are certain, that
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many of the Pagan, and we have some reason to believe, that not a few of the Philosophic world, during that period, did not turn aside from the awful spectacle of miracles, but saw and believed; and that a few others should be found, who probably had never seen, and therefore would not believe, is surely no very extraordinary circumstance. Why should we not answer to objections, such as these, with the boldness of St. Jerome; and bid Celsus, and Porphyry, and Julian, and their followers, learn the illustrious characters of the men, who founded, built up, and adorned the Christian church*? why should we not tell them, with Arnobius, of the orators, the grammarians, the rhetoricians, the lawyers, the physicians, the philosophers, "who appeared conscious of the alterations in the moral and physical government of the world;" and from that consciousness, forsook the

* *Discant Celsus, Porphyrius, Julianus, rabidi adversus Christum canes, discant eorum sectatores, qui putant Ecclesiam nullos Philosophos et eloquentes, nullos habuisse Doctores; quanti et quales viri eam fundaverint, extruxerint, ornaverintque; et desinant fidem nostram rusticæ tantum simplicitatis arguere, suamque potius imperitiam agnoscant.* Jero. Proc. Lib. de Illuf. Eccl. Scrip.

ordinary occupations of life and study, and attached themselves to the Christian discipline*?

I ANSWER in the last place, that the miracles of Christians were falsely attributed to magic; and were for that reason thought unworthy the notice of the writers, you have referred to. Suetonius, in his life of Nero, calls the Christians, Men of a new and magical superstition †: I am sensible, that you laugh at those “ sagacious commentators,” who translate the original word by magical; and adopting the idea of Mosheim, you think it ought to be rendered mischievous or pernicious: Unquestionably it frequently has that meaning; with due deference, however, to Mosheim and yourself, I cannot help being of opinion, that in this place, as descriptive of the Christian religion, it is rightly translated magical. The Theodosian Code must be my excuse, for dissenting from such respectable authority; and in it, I conjecture, you will find

* Arnob. Con. Gen. L. 11.

† Genus hominum, superstitionis novæ et *malificæ*. Suet. in Nero. c. 16.

good reason for being of my opinion *. Nor ought any friend to Christianity to be astonished or alarmed at Suetonius applying the word Magical to the Christian religion; for the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, principally consisted in alleviating the distresses, by curing the obstinate diseases of human kind; and the proper meaning of magic, as understood by the antients, is a higher and more holy branch of the art of healing †. The elder Pliny lost his life in an eruption of Vesuvius, about forty-seven years after the death of Christ; some fifteen years before the death of Pliny, the Christians were persecuted at Rome for a crime, of which every person knew them innocent; but from the description, which Tacitus gives, of the low estimation they were held in at that time, (for which, however, he assigns no cause; and therefore we

* Chaldæi, ac *Magi*, et cæteri quos vulgus *maleficos* ob facinorum magnitudinem appellat. — Si quis *magus* vel *magicis* contaminibus adfuetus, qui *maleficus* vulgi consuetudine nuncupatur. 1X Cod. Theodo. Tit. XVI.

† Pliny, speaking of the origin of magic, says, *Natum primum e medicina nemo dubitat, ac specie salutari irrepisse velut alioem sanlioremque medicinam.* — He afterwards says, that it was mixed with mathematical arts; and thus *magici* and *mathematici* are joined by Pliny, as *malefici* and *magici* are in the Theodosian Code. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. 30. c. 1.

may reasonably conjecture it was the same, for which the Jews were every where become so odious, an opposition to polytheism) and of the extreme sufferings they underwent, we cannot be much surpris'd, that their name is not to be found in the works of Pliny, or of Seneca; the sect itself must, by Nero's persecution, have been almost destroyed in Rome; and it would have been uncourtly, not to say unsafe, to have noticed an order of men, whose innocence an Emperor had determin'd to traduce, in order to divert the dangerous, but deserved stream of popular censure from himself. Notwithstanding this, there is a passage in the Natural History of Pliny; which, how much soever it may have been overlooked, contains, I think, a very strong allusion to the Christians; and clearly intimates, he had heard of their miracles. In speaking concerning the origin of magic, he says, — there is also another faction of magic, derived from the Jews, Moses and Lotopea, and subsisting at present*. — The word

* Est et alia magices *factio*, a Mose *etiamnum* et Lotopea Judæis pendens. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. 30. c. 2. Edit. Hardu. Dr. Lardner and others, have made slight mention of this passage, probably from their reading in bad editions *Jamne* for *etiamnum*, a Mose et Jamne et Jotape Judæis pendens.

faction,

faction, does not ill denote the opinion the Romans entertained of the religious associations of the Christians *; and a magical faction implies their pretensions, at least, to the miraculous gifts of healing; and it's descending from Moses, is according to the custom of the Romans, by which they confounded the Christians with the Jews; and it's being then subsisting, seems to have a strong reference to the rumours Pliny had negligently heard reported of the Christians.

SUBMITTING each of these answers to your cool and candid consideration; I proceed to take notice of another difficulty in your fifteenth chapter, which some have thought one of the most important in your whole book — The silence of profane historians, concerning the preternatural darkness at the crucifixion of Christ. — You know, Sir, that several learned men are of opinion, that profane history is not silent upon this subject; I will, however, put their authority for the present quite out of the question. I will neither trouble you with the testimony of Phlegon, nor with the appeal

* Tertullian reckons the Sect of the Christians, *inter licitas factiones*. Ap. c. 38.

of Tertullian to the public registers of the Romans; but meeting you upon your own ground, and granting you every thing you desire, I will endeavour, from a fair and candid examination of the history of this event, to suggest a doubt, at least, to your mind, whether this was “the greatest phæ-nomenon, to which the mortal eye has been witness, since the creation of the globe.”

THIS darkness is mentioned by three of the four Evangelists; St. Matthew thus expresses himself, — *now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour*; St. Mark says, — *and when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour*; St. Luke, — *and it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; and the sun was darkened*. The three Evangelists agree, that there was darkness; — and they agree in the extent of the darkness: For it is the same expression in the original, which our translators have rendered *earth* in Luke, and *land* in the two other accounts; and they agree in the duration of the darkness, it lasted three hours: — Luke adds a particular circumstance, *that the sun was dark-*

darkened. I do not know, whether this event be any where else mentioned in scripture, so that our inquiry can neither be extensive nor difficult.

IN philosophical propriety of speech, darkness consists in the total absence of light; and admits of no degrees; however, in the more common acceptation of the word, there are degrees of darkness, as well as of light; and as the Evangelists have said nothing, by which the particular degree of darkness can be determined; we have as much reason to suppose it was slight, as you have that it was excessive; but if it was slight, though it had extended itself over the surface of the whole globe, the difficulty of it's not being recorded by Pliny or Seneca vanishes at once*. Do you not perceive, Sir, upon what a slender foundation this mighty objection is grounded; when we

* The Author of L'Évangile de la Raison, is mistaken in saying, that the Evangelists speak of a *thick darkness*; and that mistake has led him into another, into a disbelief of the event, because it has not been mentioned by the writers of the times — *ses historiens* (the Evangelists) ont le front de nous dire, qu' à sa mort la terre a été couverte d'épaisses ténèbres en plein midi et en pleine lune; comme si tous les écrivains de ce tems-la n' auroient pas remarqué un si étrange miracle! L'Évan. de la Raif. P. 99.

have only to put you upon proving, that the darkness at the crucifixion was of so unusual a nature, as to have excited the particular attention of all mankind, or even of those who were witnesses to it? But I do not mean to deal so logically with you; rather give me leave to spare you the trouble of your proof, by proving, or shewing the probability at least, of the direct contrary. There is a circumstance mentioned by St. John, which seems to indicate, that the darkness was not so excessive, as is generally supposed; for it is probable, that during the continuance of the darkness, Jesus spoke both to his mother, and to his beloved disciple, whom he *saw* from the cross; they were near the cross; but the soldiers which surrounded it, must have kept them at too great a distance, for Jesus to have *seen* them and *known* them, had the darkness at the crucifixion been excessive, like the preternatural darkness, which God brought upon the land of Egypt; for it is expressly said, that during the continuance of that darkness, *they saw not one another*. The expression in St. Luke, *the sun was darkened*, tends rather to confirm, than to overthrow this reasoning. I am sensible, this expression is
gene-

generally thought equivalent to another — the sun was eclipsed; — but the Bible is open to us all; and there can be no presumption, in endeavouring to investigate the meaning of scripture for ourselves. Luckily for the present argumentation, the very phrase of the sun's being darkened, occurs, in so many words, in one other place (and in only one) of the new testament; and from that place, you may possibly see reason to imagine, that the darkness might not, perhaps, have been so intense, as to deserve the particular notice of the Roman naturalists: — *And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun was darkened*, and the air, by reason of the smoke of the pit.* If we should say, that the sun at the crucifixion was obnubilated, and darkened by the intervention of clouds, as it is here represented to be by the intervention of a smoke, like the smoke of a furnace, I do not see what you could object to our account; but such a phænomenon has, surely, no right to be esteemed the greatest that mortal eye has ever beheld. I may be mistaken in this interpretation; but I have no

* — και ισκοτιθη ο ηλιος. Αποκ. 9. 2.

design to misrepresent the fact, in order to get rid of a difficulty; the darkness may have been as intense, as many commentators have supposed it; but neither they, nor you can prove it was so; and I am surely under no necessity, upon this occasion, of granting you, out of deference to any commentator, what you can neither prove nor render probable.

BUT you still, perhaps, may think, that the darkness, by it's extent, made up for this deficiency in point of intenseness. The original word, expressive of it's extent, is sometimes interpreted by the whole earth; more frequently in the new testament, of any little portion of the earth; for we read of the land of Judah, of the land of Israel, of the land of Zabulon, and of the land of Nephthalim; and it may very properly, I conceive, be translated in the place in question by *Region*. But why should all the world take notice of a darkness, which extended itself for a few miles about Jerusalem, and lasted but three hours? The Italians, especially, had no reason to remark the event as singular; since they were accustomed, at that time, as they are at present,

sent, to see the *neighbouring regions* so darkened for days together by the eruptions of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*, that no man could know his neighbour*. We learn from the scripture account, that an earthquake accompanied this darkness; and a dark clouded sky, I apprehend, very frequently precedes an earthquake; but its extent is not great, nor is its intenseness excessive, nor is the phænomenon itself so unusual, as not commonly to pass unnoticed in ages of science and history. I fear; I may be liable to misrepresentation in this place; but I beg it may be observed, that however slight in degree, or however confined in extent the darkness at the crucifixion may have been; I am of opinion, that the power of God was as supernaturally exerted in its production, and in that of the earthquake which accompanied it, as in the opening of the graves, and the resurrection of the saints, which followed the resurrection of Christ.

* — nos autem tenebras cogitemus tantas, quantæ quondam eruptione *Etnæ*orum ignium *finitimas regiones obscuravisse* dicuntur, ut per biduum nemo hominem homo agnosceret. Cic. de Nat. Deo. L. 2. And Pliny, in describing the eruption of *Vesuvius*, which suffocated his uncle, says, — *Dies alibi, illic nox omnibus noctibus nigrior densiorque.*

In another place, you seem not to believe “ that Pontius Pilate informed the Emperor of the unjust sentence of death, which he had pronounced against an innocent person :” And the same reason, which made him silent as to the death, ought, one would suppose, to have made him silent as to the miraculous events, which accompanied it : And if Pilate in his dispatches to the Emperor, transmitted no account of the darkness (how great soever you suppose it to have been) which happened in a distant province ; I cannot apprehend, that the report of it could have ever gained such credit at Rome, as to induce either Pliny or Seneca to mention it as an authentic fact.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER SIXTH.

S I R,

I MEAN not to detain you long with my remarks upon your sixteenth Chapter; for in a short Apology for Christianity, it cannot be expected, that I should apologize at length, for the indiscretions of the first Christians. Nor have I any disposition to reap a malicious pleasure, from exaggerating, what you have had so much goodnatured pleasure in extenuating, the truculent barbarity of their Roman persecutors.

M. DE VOLTAIRE has embraced every opportunity, of contrasting the persecuting temper of the Christians with the mild tolerance of the antient heathens; and I never read a page of his upon this subject, without thinking Christianity materially, if not intentionally, obliged to him, for his endeavour

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your to depress the lofty spirit of religious bigotry. I may with justice pay the same compliment to you; and I do it with sincerity; heartily wishing, that in the prosecution of your work, you may render every species of intolerance universally detestable. There is no reason, why you should abate the asperity of your invective; since no one can suspect you of a design to traduce Christianity, under the guise of a zeal against persecution; or if any one should be so simple, he need but open the gospel to be convinced, that such a scheme is too palpably absurd, to have ever entered the head of any sensible and impartial man.

I WISH, for the credit of human nature, that I could find reason to agree with you, in what you have said of the “universal toleration of Polytheism; of the mild indifference of antiquity; of the Roman Princes beholding, without concern, a thousand forms of religion subsisting in peace under their gentle sway.” But there are some passages in the Roman History, which make me hesitate at least in this point; and almost induce me to believe, that the Romans were
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exceedingly jealous of all foreign religions, whether they were accompanied with immoral manners or not.

It was the Roman custom indeed, to invite the tutelary gods of the nations, which they intended to subdue, to abandon their charge; and to promise them the same, or even a more august worship in the city of Rome*; and their triumphs were graced as much with the exhibition of their captive gods, as with the less humane one of their captive kings †. But this custom, though it filled the city with hundreds of gods of every country, denomination, and quality, cannot be brought as a proof of Roman toleration; it may indicate the excess of their vanity, the extent of their superstition, or the refinement of their policy; but it can never shew, that the religion of individuals, when it differed from public wisdom, was either connived at as a matter of indiffer-

* In oppugnationibus, ante omnia solitum a Romanis Sacerdotibus evocari Deum, cujus in tutela id oppidum esset; promittique illi eundem, aut ampliorem apud Romanos cultum. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 38. C. iv.

† Roma triumphantis quotiens Ducis inclita currum
Plausibus excepit, totiens altaria Divum
Addidit spoliis sibimet nova numina fecit. Pruden.

ence,

ence, or tolerated as an inalienable right of human nature.

UPON another occasion, you, Sir, have referred to Livy, as relating the introduction and suppression of the rites of Bacchus; and in that very place we find him confessing, that the prohibiting all foreign religions, and the abolishing every mode of sacrifice which differed from the Roman mode, was a business frequently entrusted by their ancestors to the care of the proper magistrates; and he gives this reason for the procedure, That nothing could contribute more effectually to the ruin of religion, than the sacrificing after an external rite, and not after the manner instituted by their fathers*.

NOT thirty years before this event, the Prætor, in conformity to a decree of the senate, had issued an edict — that no one

* Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent? sacrificulos vatesque foro, circo, urbe prohiberent? vaticinos libros conquirerent comburerentque? omnem disciplinam sacrificandi, præterquam more Romano, abolerent? Judicabant enim prudentissimi viri omnis divini humanique juris, nihil æque dissolvendæ religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio, sed externo ritu sacrificaretur. Liv. L. xxxix. C. xvi.

should

should presume to sacrifice in any public place after a new or foreign manner*. And in a still more early period, the Ædiles had been commanded to take care, that no gods were worshipped, except the Roman gods; and that the Roman gods were worshipped after no manner, but the established manner of the country †.

BUT to come nearer to the times, of which you are writing. In Dion Cassius you may meet with a great courtier, one of the interior cabinet, and a polished statesman, in a set speech, upon the most momentous subject, expressing himself to the Emperor, in a manner agreeable enough to the practice of antiquity, but utterly inconsistent with the most remote idea of religious toleration. The speech alluded to, contains, I confess it, nothing more than the advice of an individual; but it ought to be remembered, that *that* individual was Mæcenas,

* Ut quicumque *libros vaticinos precationesque*, aut artem sacrificandi conscriptam haberet, eos libros omnes litterasque ad se ante Kalendas Apriles deferret: neu quis in publico sacrove loco, novo aut externo ritu sacrificaret. Liv. L. xxv. C. 1.

† Datum inde negotium ædilibus, ut animadverterent, ne qui, nisi Romani Dii neu quo alio more, quam patrio colebantur. Liv. L. iv. C. 30.

that the advice was given to Augustus, and that the occasion of giving it, was no less important than the settling the form of the Roman government. He recommends it to Cæsar, to worship the gods himself, according to the established form; and to *force* all others to do the same; and to *hate* and to *punish* all those, who should attempt to introduce foreign religions*: Nay, he bids him in the same place, have an eye upon the philosophers also; so that free thinking, free speaking at least, upon religious matters, was not quite so safe under the gentle sway of the Roman princes; as, thank God, it is under the much more gentle government of our own.

In the Edict of Toleration published by Galerius after six years unremitting persecution of the Christians, we perceive his motive for persecution, to have been the same with that, which had influenced the conduct of the more antient Romans, an abhorrence of all innovations in religion. You have favoured us with the translation of this

* Ταυτα τι εγω γραττε, και προσειπι το μη θειον πατηρ πατωσ αυτοσ τι σιβη, κατα τα πατρια, και της αλλης τιμασ αναγκαζει· της δε δη ξινηζοντασ τι περι αυτω και μισω και πολαζει. Dion. Caf. L. 52.

edict,

edict, in which he says — “ we were particularly desirous of reclaiming into the way of reason and nature;” *ad bonas mentes* (a good pretence this for a Polytheistic persecutor) “ the deluded Christians, who had renounced the religion and ceremonies instituted by their fathers” — this is the precise language of Livy, describing a persecution of a foreign religion three hundred years before, *turba erat nec sacrificantium nec precantium Deos patrio more*. And the very expedient of forcing the Christians to deliver up their religious books, which was practised in this persecution, and which Mosheim attributes to the advice of Hierocles, and you to that of the philosophers of those times, seems clear to me, from the places in Livy, before quoted, to have been nothing but an old piece of state policy, to which the Romans had recourse, as often as they apprehended their established religion to be in any danger.

IN the preamble of the letter of toleration, which the emperor Maximin reluctantly wrote to Sabinus about a year after the publication of Galerius' Edict, there is a plain avowal of the reasons, which induced

Galerius and Diocletian to commence their persecution; they had seen the temples of the gods forsaken, and were determined by the severity of punishment to reclaim men to their worship*.

IN short, the system recommended by Mæcenas, of forcing every person to be of the emperor's religion, and of hating and punishing every innovator, contained no new doctrine; it was correspondent to the practice of the Roman senate, in the most illustrious times of the republic; and seems to have been generally adopted by the emperors, in their treatment of Christians, whilst they themselves were Pagans; and in their treatment of Pagans, after they themselves became Christians; and if any one should be willing to derive those laws against Heretics (which are so abhorrent from the mild spirit of the gospel, and so reproachful to the Roman Code) from the blind adherence of the Christian emperors to the intollerant policy of their Pagan predecessors,

* Συμμοι σχειδι απαντας ανθρωπους, καλαιφθισης της των θιων θρησκιας, τω ιδιω των χριστιανων ικυτος συμμομοχοτας. Ορθως διατιταχιναι παντας ανθρωπους της απο των θιων των αθανατων αναχωρησαλιας, προ δηλω κολασει και τιμωρια εις τω θρησκια των θιων ανακληθιναι. Euseb. Lib. ix. C. 4.

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something, I think, might be produced in support of his conjecture.

BUT I am sorry to have said so much upon such a subject.— In endeavouring to palliate the severity of the Romans towards the Christians, you have remarked, “ it was in vain, that the oppressed believer asserted the inalienable rights of conscience, and private judgment.” “ Though his situation might excite the pity, his arguments could never reach the understanding, either of the philosophic, or of the believing part of the Pagan world.” How is this, Sir? are the arguments for liberty of conscience, so exceedingly inconclusive, that you think them incapable of reaching the understanding, even of philosophers? A captious adversary would embrace with avidity, the opportunity this passage affords him, of blotting your character with the odious stain of being a persecutor; a stain, which no learning can wipe out, which no genius or ability can render amiable. I am far from entertaining such an opinion of your principles; but this conclusion seems fairly deducible from what you have said, — that the minds of the Pagans, were so pre-occupied with

the notions of forcing, and hating, and punishing those, who differed from them in religion, that arguments for the inalienable rights of conscience, which would have convinced yourself and every philosopher in Europe, and staggered the resolution of an inquisitor, were incapable of reaching their understandings, or making any impression on their hearts; and you might, perhaps, have spared yourself some perplexity, in the investigation of the motives, which induced the Roman emperors to persecute, and the Roman people to hate the Christians, if you had not overlooked the true one, and adopted with too great facility, the erroneous idea of the extreme tolerance of Pagan Rome.

THE Christians, you observe, were accused of atheism:— And it must be owned, that they were the greatest of all atheists, in the opinion of the polytheists; for, instead of Hesioid's thirty thousand gods, they could not be brought to acknowledge above one; and even that one they refused, at the hazard of their lives, to blaspheme with the appellation of Jupiter. But is it not somewhat singular, that the pretensions of the Christians to a constant intercourse with superior beings,

beings, in the working of miracles, should have been a principal cause of converting to their faith, those who branded them with the imputation of atheism?

THEY were accused too, of forming dangerous conspiracies against the state:—This accusation, you own, was as unjust as the preceding; but there seems to have been a peculiar hardship in the situation of the Christians; since the very same men, who thought them dangerous to the state, on account of their conspiracies; condemned them, as you have observed, for not interfering in it's concerns; for their criminal disregard to the business of war and government; and for their entertaining doctrines, which were supposed "to prohibit them from assuming the character of soldiers, of magistrates, and of princes:" Men, such as these, would have made but poor conspirators.

THEY were accused, lastly, of the most horrid crimes:—This accusation, it is confessed, was mere calumny; yet, as calumny is generally more extensive in it's influence, than truth, perhaps this calumny might be

more powerful in stopping the progress of Christianity, than the virtues of the Christians were in promoting it: And in truth, Origen observes, that the Christians, on account of the crimes which were maliciously laid to their charge, were held in such abhorrence, that no one would so much as speak to them. It may be worth while to remark from him, that the Jews, in the very beginning of Christianity, were the authors of all those calumnies, which Celsus afterwards took such great delight in urging against the Christians, and which you have mentioned with such great precision*.

It is no improbable supposition, that the clandestine manner, in which the persecuting spirit of the Jews and Gentiles, obliged the Christians to celebrate their Eucharist, together with the expressions of eating the

* Videtur mihi fecisse idem Celsus, quod Judæi, qui sub Christianismi initium errorem sparsere, quasi ejus sectæ homines mastati pueri vescerentur carnibus; et quod, quoties eis libeat operam dare occultis libidinibus, extincto lumine constupret, quam quisque nactus fuerit. Quæ falsa et iniqua opinio dudum valde multos a religione nostra alienos tenuit; persuasos, quod tales sint Christiani; et ad hoc temporis nonnullos fallit; quia ea de causa Christianos averfantur, ut nec simplex colloquium cum eis habere velint. Orig. con. Cel. Lib. vi.

body,

body, and drinking the blood of Christ, which were used in it's institution, and the custom of imparting a kiss of charity to each other, and of calling each other by the appellations of brother and sister*, gave occasions to their enemies to invent, and induced careless observers to believe, all the odious things which were said against the Christians.

You have displayed at length, in expressive diction, the accusations of the enemies of Christianity; and you have told us, of the imprudent defence, by which the Christians vindicated the purity of their morals; and you have huddled up in a short note, (which many a reader will never see) the testimony of Pliny to their innocence; permit me to do the Christians a little justice, by producing in their cause the whole truth.

BETWEEN seventy and eighty years after the death of Christ, Pliny had occasion to consult the emperor Trajan, concerning the manner, in which he should treat the Chris-

* The Romans used these expressions in so impure a sense, that Martial calls them, *Nomina nequiora*. Lib. II. Epig. iv.

tians;

tians ; it seems as if there had been judicial proceedings against them, though Pliny had never happened to attend any of them. He knew, indeed, that men were to be punished for being Christians, or he would not, as a sensible magistrate, have received the accusations of legal, much less of illegal, anonymous informers against them ; nor would he, before he wrote to the emperor, have put to death those, whom his threats could not hinder from persevering in their confession, that they were Christians. His harsh manner of proceeding " in an office the most repugnant to his humanity," had made many apostatize from their profession ; persons of this complexion, were well fitted to inform him of every thing they knew concerning the Christians ; accordingly, he examined them ; but not one of them accused the Christians of any other crime, than of praying to Christ, as to some God, and of binding themselves by an oath, not to be guilty of any wickedness. Not contented with this information, he put two maid servants, which were called ministers, to the torture ; but even the rack, could not extort from the imbecility of the sex, a confession of any crime, any account different from
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from that which the Apostates had voluntarily given; not a word do we find of their feasting upon murdered infants, or of their mixing in incestuous commerce. After all his pains, Pliny pronounced the meal of the Christians to be *promiscuous* and *innocent*: Persons of both sexes, of all ages, and of every condition, assembled promiscuously together: There was nothing for chastity to blush at, or for humanity to shudder at, in these meetings; there was no secret initiation of proselytes by abhorred rites; but they eat a promiscuous meal in Christian charity, and with the most perfect innocence*.

WHATEVER faults then, the Christians may have been guilty of in after times; though you could produce to us a thousand ambitious prelates of Carthage, or sensual ones of Antioch, and blot ten thousand

* — affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire: carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem: seque sacramento non *in seclus* aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: quibus peccatis, morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, *promiscuum* tamen, et *innocuum*. Plin. Epist. xcvi. Lib. x.

pages with the impurities of the Christian clergy; yet at this period, whilst the memory of Christ and his Apostles, was fresh in their minds; or, in the more emphatic language of Jerome, "whilst the blood of our Lord was warm, and recent faith was fervent in the believers;" we have the greatest reason to conclude, that they were eminently distinguished for the probity and the purity of their lives. Had there been but a shadow of a crime in their assemblies, it must have been detected by the industrious search of the intelligent Pliny; and it is a matter of real surprise, that no one of the apostates, thought of paying court to the governor, by a false testimony; especially, as the apostacy seems to have been exceeding general; since the temples, which had been almost deserted, began again to be frequented; and the victims, for which a little time before, scarce a purchaser was to be found, began again every where to be bought up. This, Sir, is a valuable testimony in our favour; it is not that of a declaiming apologist, of a deluding priest, or of a deluded martyr, of an orthodox bishop, or of any "of the most pious of men" the Christians; but it is that of a Roman magistrate, philosopher,

sopher, and lawyer; who cannot be supposed to have wanted inclination to detect the immoralities, or the conspiracies of the Christians; since, in his treatment of them, he had stretched the authority of his office, and violated alike the laws of his country, and of humanity.

WITH this testimony, I will conclude my remarks; for I have no disposition to blacken the character you have given of Nero; or to lessen the humanity of the Roman magistrates; or to magnify the number of Christians, or of martyrs; or to undertake the defence of a few fanatics, who by their injudicious zeal, brought ruin upon themselves, and disgrace upon their profession. I may not probably have convinced you, that you are wrong in any thing, which you have advanced; or that the authors you have quoted, will not support you in the inferences, you have drawn from their works; or that Christianity ought to be distinguished from it's corruptions; yet I may, perhaps, have had the good fortune to lessen, in the minds of others, some of that dislike to the Christian religion, which the perusal of your book had unhappily excited.

cited. I have touched but upon general topics; for I should have wearied out your patience, to say nothing of my readers', or my own, had I enlarged upon every thing in which I dissent from you; and a minute examination of your work would, moreover, have had the appearance of a captious disposition, to descend into illiberal personalities; and might have produced a certain acrimony of sentiment or expression, which may be serviceable in supplying the place of argument, or adding a zest to a dull composition; but has nothing to do with the investigation of truth. Sorry shall I be, if what I have written, should give the least interruption to the prosecution of the great work, in which you are engaged; the world is now possessed of the opinion of us both, upon the subject in question; and it may, perhaps, be proper for us both to leave it in this state; I say not this, from any backwardness to acknowledge my mistakes, when I am convinced that I am in an error; but to express the almost insuperable reluctance, which I feel to the bandying abusive argument, in public controversy: It is not, in good truth, a difficult task, to chastise the forward petulance of those, who mistake
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personal invective for reasoning, and clumsy banter for ingenuity; but it is a dirty business at best, and should never be undertaken by a man of any temper, except when the interests of truth may suffer by his neglect. Nothing of this nature, I am sensible, is to be expected from you; and if any thing of the kind has happened to escape myself, I hereby disclaim the intention of saying it; and heartily wish it unsaid.

WILL you permit me, Sir, through this channel, (I may not, perhaps, have another so good an opportunity of doing it,) to address a few words? not to yourself, but to a set of men, who disturb all serious company with their profane declamation against Christianity; and who having picked up in their travels, or the writings of the deists, a few flimsy objections, infect with their ignorant and irreverent ridicule the ingenuous minds of the rising generation.

GENTLE-

GENTLEMEN,

SUPPOSE the mighty work accomplished, the cross trampled upon, Christianity every where proscribed, and the religion of Nature once more become the religion of Europe; what advantage will you have derived to your country, or to yourselves from the exchange? I know your answer — you will have freed the world from the hypocrisy of Priests, and the tyranny of Superstition. — No; you forget that Lycurgus, and Numa, and Odin, and Mango-Copac, and all the great legislators of antient and modern story, have been of opinion, that the affairs of civil society could not well be conducted without *some* religion; you must of necessity introduce a priesthood, with, probably, as much hypocrisy; a religion, with, assuredly, more superstition, than that which you now reprobate with such indecent and ill-grounded contempt. But I will tell you, from what you will have freed the world; you will have freed it from it's abhorrence of vice, and from every powerful incentive to virtue; you will, with the religion, have brought back the depraved morality, of Paganism;
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you will have robbed mankind of their firm assurance of another life; and thereby you will have despoiled them of their patience, of their humility, of their charity, of their chastity, of all those mild and silent virtues, which (however despicable they may appear in your eyes) are the only ones, which meliorate and sublime our nature; which Paganism never knew, which spring from Christianity alone, which do or might constitute our comfort in this life, and without the possession of which, another life, if after all there should happen to be one, must (unless a miracle be exerted in the alteration of our disposition) be more vicious and more miserable than this is.

PERHAPS you will contend, that the universal light of reason, that the truth and fitness of things, are of themselves, sufficient to exalt the nature, and regulate the manners of mankind. Shall we never have done with this groundless commendation of natural law? Look into the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and you will see the extent of it's influence over the Gentiles of those days; or if you dislike Paul's authority, and the manners of antiquity;

look into the more admired accounts of modern Voyagers; and examine it's influence over the Pagans of our own times, over the sensual inhabitants of Otaheitè, over the Cannibals of New Zealand, or the remorseless Savages of America. But these men are Barbarians.—Your law of nature, notwithstanding, extends even to them:—But they have misused their reason;—they have then the more need of, and would be the more thankful for that revelation, which you, with an ignorant and fastidious self-sufficiency deem useless.—But, they might of themselves, if they thought fit, become wise and virtuous.—I answer with Cicero, *ut nihil interest, utrum nemo valeat, an nemo valere possit; sic non intelligo quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens, an nemo esse possit.*

THESE however, you will think, are extraordinary instances; and that we ought not from these, to take our measure of the excellency of the law of nature; but rather from the civilized states of China and Japan, or from the nations which flourished in learning and in arts, before Christianity was heard of in the world. You mean to say, that by the law of nature, which you
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are desirous of substituting in the room of the gospel, you do not understand those rules of conduct, which an individual, abstracted from the community, and deprived of the institution of mankind, could exco-
 gitate for himself; but such a system of pre-
 cepts, as the most enlightened men of the
 most enlightened ages, have recommended
 to our observance. Where do you find this
 system? We cannot meet with it in the
 works of Stobæus, or the Scythian Ana-
 charsis, nor in those of Plato or of Cicero,
 nor in those of the Emperor Antoninus, or
 the slave Epictetus; for we are persuaded,
 that the most animated considerations of
 the *utile*, and the *honestum*, of the beauty
 of virtue, and the fitness of things, are not
 able to furnish, even a Brutus himself, with
 permanent principles of action; much less
 are they able, to purify the polluted recesses
 of a vitiated heart, to curb the irregularity
 of appetite, or restrain the impetuosity of
 passion in common men. If you order us
 to examine the works of Grotius, or Puffen-
 dorf, of Burlamaqui, or Hutchinson, for
 what you understand by the law of nature;
 we apprehend that you are in a great error,
 in taking your notions of natural law, as

discoverable by natural reason, from the elegant systems of it, which have been drawn up by Christian Philosophers; since they have all laid their foundations, either tacitly or expressly, upon a principle derived from revelation, A thorough knowledge of the Being and attributes of God: and even those amongst yourselves, who, rejecting Christianity still continue Theists, are indebted to revelation (whether you are either aware of, or disposed to acknowledge the debt, or not) for those sublime speculations concerning the Deity, which you have fondly attributed to the excellency of your own unassisted reason. If you would know the real genius of natural law, and how far it can proceed in the investigation or enforcement of moral duties; you must consult the manners and the writings of those, who have never heard of either the Jewish or the Christian dispensation, or of those other manifestations of himself, which God vouchsafed to Adam and to the Patriarchs, before and after the flood. It would be difficult perhaps any where, to find a people entirely destitute of traditionary notices concerning a Deity, and of traditionary fears or expectations of another life; and the morals of mankind may have,

have, perhaps, been no where quite so abandoned, as they would have been, had they been left wholly to themselves in these points: However, it is a truth, which cannot be denied, how much soever it may be lamented, that though the generality of mankind have always had some faint conceptions of God, and his providence; yet they have been always greatly inefficacious in the production of good morality, and highly derogatory to his nature, amongst all the people of the earth, except the Jews and Christians; and some may perhaps be desirous of excepting the Mahometans, who derive all that is good in their *Koran* from Christianity.

THE laws concerning justice, and the reparation of damages, concerning the security of property, and the performance of contracts; concerning, in short, whatever affects the wellbeing of civil society, have been every where understood with sufficient precision; and if you choose to stile Justinian's code, a code of natural law, though you will err against propriety of speech, yet you are so far in the right, that natural reason discovered, and the depravity of hu-

man nature compelled human kind, to establish by proper sanctions the laws therein contained; and you will have moreover Carneades, no mean Philosopher, on your side; who knew of no law of nature, different from that which men had instituted for their common utility; and which was various according to the manners of men in different climates, and changeable with a change of times in the same. And in truth, in all countries where Paganism has been the established religion, though a philosopher may now and then have stepped beyond the paltry prescript of civil jurisprudence, in his pursuit of virtue; yet the bulk of mankind have ever been contented with that scanty pittance of morality, which enabled them to escape the lash of civil punishment: I call it a scanty pittance; because a man may be intemperate, iniquitous, impious, a thousand ways a profligate and a villain, and yet elude the cognizance, and avoid the punishment of civil laws.

I AM sensible, you will be ready to say, what is all this to the purpose? though the bulk of mankind may never be able to investigate the laws of natural religion, nor
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disposed to reverence their sanctions when investigated by others, nor solicitous about any other standard of moral rectitude, than civil legislation; yet the inconveniences which may attend the extirpation of Christianity, can be no proof of it's truth: — I have not produced them, as a proof of it's truth; but they are a strong and conclusive proof, if not of it's truth, at least of it's utility; and the consideration of it's utility, may be a motive to yourselves for examining, whether it may not chance to be true; and it ought to be a reason with every good citizen, and with every man of sound judgment, to keep his opinions to himself, if from any particular circumstances in his studies or in his education, he should have the misfortune to think that it is not true. If you can discover to the rising generation, a better religion than the Christian, one that will more effectually animate their hopes, and subdue their passions, make them better men or better members of society, we importune you to publish it for their advantage; but till you can do that, we beg of you, not to give the reins to their passions, by instilling into their unsuspecting minds your pernicious prejudices: Even now, men

scruple not, by their lawless lust, to ruin the repose of private families, and to fix a stain of infamy upon the noblest: Even now, they hesitate not, in lifting up a murderous arm against the life of their friend, or against their own, as often as the fever of intemperance, stimulates their resentment; or the satiety of an useless life excites their despondency: Even now, whilst we are persuaded of a resurrection from the dead, and of a *judgment to come*, we find it difficult enough to resist the sollicitations of sense, and to escape unspotted from the licentious manners of the world: But what will become of our virtue, what of the consequent peace and happiness of society, if you persuade us, that there are no such things? in two words, — you may ruin yourselves by your attempt, and you will certainly ruin your country by your success.

BUT the consideration of the inutility of your design, is not the only one, which should induce you to abandon it; the argument *a tuto* ought to be warily managed, or it may tend to the silencing our opposition to any system of superstition, which has had the good fortune to be sanctified by public
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authority; it is, indeed, liable to no objection in the present case; we do not, however, wholly rely upon it's cogency. It is not contended, that Christianity is to be received, merely because it is useful; but because it is true. This you deny, and think your objections well grounded; we conceive them originating in your vanity, your immorality, or your misapprehension. There are many worthless doctrines, many superstitious observances, which the fraud or folly of mankind have every where annexed to Christianity, (especially in the church of Rome,) as essential parts of it; if you take these sorry appendages to Christianity, for Christianity itself, as preached by Christ, and by the Apostles; if you confound the Roman with the Christian religion; you quite misapprehend it's nature; and are in a state similar to that of men, mentioned by Plutarch, in his treatise of superstition; who flying from superstition, leapt over religion, and sunk into downright Atheism*. — Christianity is not a religion

* Le Papisme, says Helvetius in a Posthumous Work, n'est aux yeux d'un homme sensé qu'une pure idolatrie — nous sommes étonnés de l'absurdité de la religion païenne. Cella de la religion Papiste étonnera bien d'avantage un
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ligion very palatable to a voluptuous age; it will not conform it's precepts to the standard of fashion; it will not lessen the deformity of vice by lenient appellations; but calls keeping, whoredom; intrigue, adultery; and duelling, murder; it will not pander the lust, it will not licence the intemperance of mankind; it is a troublesome monitor to a man of pleasure; and your way of life may have made you quarrel with your religion.—As to your vanity, as a cause of your infidelity, suffer me to produce the sentiments of M. Bayle upon that head; if the description does not suit your character, you will not be offended at it; and if you are offended with it's freedom, it will do you good. “This inclines me to believe, that Libertines, like Des-Barreaux, are not greatly persuaded of the truth of what they say. They have made no deep examination; they have learned some few objections, which they are perpetually making a noise with; they speak from a prin-

jour la posterité.—We trust, that day is not at a great distance, and deism will then be buried in the ruins of the church of Rome; for the taking the superstition, the avarice, the ambition, the intolerance of Antichristianism for Christianity, has been the great error, upon which infidelity has built it's system, both at home and abroad.

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ciple of ostentation, and give themselves the lie in the time of danger. — Vanity has a greater share in their disputes, than conscience; they imagine, that the singularity and boldness of the opinions which they maintain, will give them the reputation of men of parts: — By degrees, they get a habit of holding impious discourses; and if their vanity be accompanied by a voluptuous life, their progress in that road is the swifter*.”

THE main stress of your objections, rests not upon the insufficiency of the external evidence to the truth of Christianity; for few of you, though you may become the future ornaments of the senate, or of the bar, have ever employed an hour in it's examination; but upon the difficulty of the doctrines, contained in the new Testament: They exceed, you say, your comprehension; and you felicitate yourselves, that you are not yet arrived at the true standard of orthodox faith, — *credo quia impossibile*. You think, it would be taking a superfluous trouble, to inquire into the nature of the external proofs, by which Christianity is established; since, in your opinion, the book

* Bayle, Hist. Dict. Art. Des-Barreaux.

itself

itself carries with it its own refutation. A gentleman as acute, probably, as any of you; and who once believed, perhaps, as little as any of you, has drawn a quite different conclusion from the perusal of the new Testament; his book (however exceptionable it may be thought in some particular parts) exhibits, not only a distinguished triumph of reason over prejudice, of Christianity over Deism; but it exhibits, what is infinitely more rare, the character of a man, who has had courage and candour enough to acknowledge it*.

BUT what if there should be some incomprehensible doctrines in the Christian religion; some circumstances, which in their causes, or their consequences, surpass the reach of human reason; are they to be rejected upon that account? You are, or would be thought, men of reading, and knowledge, and enlarged understandings; weigh the matter fairly; and consider whether revealed religion be not, in this respect, just upon the same footing, with every other object of your contemplation. Even in

* See A View of the Internal Evidence, &c. by Soame Jenyns.

mathematics, the science of demonstration itself, though you get over it's first principles, and learn to digest the idea of a point without parts, a line without breadth, and a surface without thickness; yet you will find yourself at a loss to comprehend the perpetual approximation of lines, which can never meet; the doctrine of incommensurables, and of an infinity of infinites, each infinitely greater, or infinitely less, not only than any finite quantity, but than each other. In physics, you cannot comprehend the primary cause of any thing; not of the light, by which you see; nor of the elasticity of the air, by which you hear; nor of the fire, by which you are warmed. In physiology, you cannot tell, what first gave motion to the heart; nor what continues it; nor why it's motion is less voluntary, than that of the lungs; nor why you are able to move your arm, to the right or left, by a simple volition: You cannot explain the cause of animal heat; nor comprehend the principle, by which your body was at first formed, nor by which it is sustained, nor by which it will be reduced to earth. In natural religion, you cannot comprehend the eternity or omnipresence of the Deity;

nor

nor easily understand, how his prescience can be consistent with your freedom, or his immutability with his government of moral agents; nor why he did not make all his creatures equally perfect; nor why he did not create them sooner: In short, you cannot look into any branch of knowledge, but you will meet with subjects above your comprehension. The fall and the redemption of human kind, are not more incomprehensible, than the creation and the conservation of the universe; the infinite Author of the works of providence, and of nature, is equally inscrutable, equally past our finding out in them both. And it is somewhat remarkable, that the deepest inquirers into nature, have ever thought with most reverence, and spoken with most diffidence, concerning those things, which in revealed religion, may seem hard to be understood; they have ever avoided that self-sufficiency of knowledge, which springs from ignorance, produces indifference, and ends in infidelity. Admirable to this purpose, is the reflection of the greatest mathematician of the present age, when he is combating an opinion of Newton's, by an hypothesis of his own, still less defensible than that
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which he opposes: — Tous les jours que je vois de ces esprits-forts, qui critique les verites de notre religion, et s'en moquent meme avec la plus impertinente suffisance, je pense, chetifs mortels ! combien et combien des choses sur lesquels vous raisonnez si legerement, sont elles plus sublimes, et plus eleves, que celles sur lesquelles le grand Newton s'egare si grossierement*.

PLATO mentions a set of men, who were very ignorant, and thought themselves supremely wise; and who rejected the argument for the being of a God, derived from the harmony and order of the universe, as old and trite †; there have been men, it seems, in all ages, who in affecting singularity, have overlooked truth: An argument, however, is not the worse for being old; and surely it would have been a more just mode of reasoning, if you had examined the external evidence for the truth of Christianity, weighed the old arguments from miracles, and from prophecies, before you had rejected the whole account from the difficulties you met with in it. You would laugh at an Indian, who in peeping into a

* Euler,

† De Leg. Lib. x.

history of England, and meeting with the mention of the Thames being frozen, or of a shower of hail, or of snow, should throw the book aside, as unworthy of his further notice, from his want of ability to comprehend these phænomena.

IN considering the argument from miracles, you will soon be convinced, that it is possible for God to work miracles; and you will be convinced, that it is as possible for human testimony, to establish the truth of miraculous, as of physical or historical events; but before you can be convinced, that the miracles in question, are supported by such testimony, as deserves to be credited, you must inquire at what period, and by what persons, the books of the old and new Testament were composed; if you reject the account, without making this examination, you reject it from prejudice, not from reason.

THERE is, however, a short method of examining this argument, which may, perhaps, make as great an impression on your minds, as any other. Three men of distinguished abilities, rose up at different times,
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and attacked Christianity with every objection which their malice could suggest, or their learning could devise; but neither Celsus in the second century, nor Porphyry in the third, nor the emperor Julian himself in the fourth century, ever questioned the reality of the miracles related in the Gospels. Do but you grant us, what these men (who were more likely to know the truth of the matter, than you can be) granted to their adversaries, and we will very readily let you make the most of the Magic, to which, as the last wretched shift, they were forced to attribute them. We can find you men, in our days, who from the mixture of two colourless liquors, will produce you a third as red as blood, or of any other colour you desire; *et dicto citius*, by a drop resembling water, will restore the transparency; they will make two fluids coalesce into a solid body; and from the mixture of liquors colder than ice, will instantly raise you a horrid explosion and a tremendous flame: These, and twenty other tricks they will perform, without having been sent with our Saviour to Egypt to learn magic; nay, with a bottle or two of oil, they will compose the undulations of a lake; and by a little

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art, they will restore the functions of life to a man, who has been an hour or two under water, or a day or two buried in the snow: But in vain will these men, or the greatest Magician that Egypt ever saw, say to a boisterous sea, *Peace, be still*; in vain will they say to a carcase rotting in the grave, *Come forth*; the winds and the sea will not obey them, and the putrid carcase will not hear them. You need not suffer yourselves to be deprived of the weight of this argument, from it's having been observed, that the Fathers have acknowledged the supernatural part of Paganism; since the Fathers were in no condition to detect a cheat, which was supported both by the disposition of the people, and the power of the civil magistrate*; and they were from that inability, forced to attribute to infernal agency, what was too cunningly contrived to be detected, and contrived for too impious a purpose, to be credited as the work of God.

With respect to prophecy, you may, perhaps, have accustomed yourselves to consider it, as originating in Asiatic enthusiasm,

* See Ld. Lyttel's Obs. on St. Paul, p. 59.

in Chaldean mystery, or in the subtle stratagem of interested Priests; and have given yourselves no more trouble concerning the predictions of sacred, than concerning the oracles of Pagan history. Or if you have ever cast a glance upon this subject, the dissensions of learned men concerning the proper interpretation of the Revelation, and other difficult prophecies, may have made you rashly conclude, that all prophecies were equally unintelligible; and more indebted for their accomplishment, to a fortunate concurrence of events, and the pliant ingenuity of the expositor, than to the inspired foresight of the prophet. In all that the prophets of the old Testament have delivered, concerning the destruction of particular cities, and the desolation of particular kingdoms, you may see nothing but shrewd conjectures, which any one acquainted with the history of the rise and fall of empires, might certainly have made: And as you would not hold him for a prophet, who should now affirm, that London or Paris would afford to future ages, a spectacle just as melancholy, as that which we now contemplate, with a sigh, in the ruins of Agrigentum or Palmyra; so you cannot

persuade yourselves to believe, that the denunciations of the prophets against the haughty cities of Tyre or Babylon, for instance, proceeded from the inspiration of the Deity. There is no doubt, that by some such general kind of reasoning, many are influenced to pay no attention to an argument, which, if properly considered, carries with it the strongest conviction.

SPINOZA said, That he would have broken his atheistic system to pieces, and embraced without repugnance, the ordinary faith of Christians, if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead; and I question not, that there are many disbelievers, who would relinquish their Deistic tenets, and receive the gospel, if they could persuade themselves, that God had ever so far interfered in the moral government of the world, as to illumine the mind of any one man with the knowledge of future events. A miracle strikes the senses of the persons who see it, a prophecy addresses itself to the understandings of those who behold it's completion; and it requires, in many cases some learning, in all some attention, to judge of the correspondence of
events

events with the predictions concerning them. No one can be convinced, that what Jeremiah and the other prophets foretold of the fate of Babylon, that it should be besieged by the Medes; that it should be taken, when her mighty men were drunken, when her springs were dried up; and that it should become a pool of water, and should remain desolate for ever; no one, I say, can be convinced, that all these, and other parts of the prophetic denunciation, have been minutely fulfilled, without spending some time in reading the accounts, which profane Historians have delivered down to us concerning it's being taken by Cyrus; and which modern travellers have given us of it's present situation.

PORPHYRY was so persuaded of the coincidence between the prophecies of Daniel and the events, that he was forced to affirm, the prophecies were written, after the things prophesied of had happened; another Porphyry has, in our days, been so astonished at the correspondence between the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as related by St. Matthew, and the history of that event, as recorded by Josephus; that

rather than embrace Christianity, he has ventured (contrary to the faith of all ecclesiastical history, the opinion of the learned of all ages, and all the rules of good criticism) to assert, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel after Jerusalem had been taken and destroyed by the Romans. You may from these instances perceive the strength of the argument from prophecy; it has not been able indeed to vanquish the prejudices of either the antient or the modern Porphyry; but it has been able to compel them both, to be guilty of obvious falsehoods, which have nothing but impudent assertions to support them.

SOME over-zealous interpreters of scripture have found prophecies in simple narrations, extended real predictions beyond the times and circumstances to which they naturally were applied, and perplexed their readers with a thousand quaint allusions and allegorical conceits; this proceeding has made men of sense pay less regard to prophecy in general; there are some predictions, however, such as those concerning the present state of the Jewish people, and the corruption of Christianity, which are now fulfilling

filling in the world; and which, if you will take the trouble to examine them, you will find of such an extraordinary nature, that you will not perhaps hesitate to refer them to God as their author; and if you once become persuaded of the truth of any one miracle, or of the completion of any one prophecy, you will resolve all your difficulties (concerning the manner of God's interposition, in the moral government of our species, and the nature of the doctrines contained in revelation) into your own inability fully to comprehend the whole scheme of divine providence.

WE are told, however, that the strangeness of the narration, and the difficulty of the doctrines contained in the new Testament, are not the only circumstances which induce you to reject it; you have discovered, you think, so many contradictions, in the accounts which the Evangelists have given of the life of Christ, that you are compelled to consider the whole as an ill-digested and improbable story. You would not reason thus, upon any other occasion; you would not reject as fabulous the accounts given by Livy and Polybius of Hannibal and the

Carthaginians, though you should discover a difference betwixt them in several points of little importance. You cannot compare the history of the same events as delivered by any two historians, but you will meet with many circumstances; which, though mentioned by one, are either wholly omitted or differently related by the other; and this observation is peculiarly applicable to biographical writings: But no one ever thought of disbelieving the leading circumstances of the lives of Vitellius or Vespasian, because Tacitus and Suetonius did not in every thing correspond in their accounts of these emperors; and if the memoirs of the life and doctrines of M. de Voltaire himself, were some twenty or thirty years after his death, to be delivered to the world by four of his most intimate acquaintance; I do not apprehend that we should discredit the whole account of such an extraordinary man, by reason of some slight inconsistencies and contradictions, which the avowed enemies of his name might chance to discover in the several narrations. Though we should grant you then, that the Evangelists had fallen into some trivial contradictions, in what they have related concerning the life of
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Christ; yet you ought not to draw any other inference from our concession, than that they had not plotted together, as cheats would have done, in order to give an unexceptionable consistency to their fraud. We are not however disposed to make you any such concession; we will rather shew you the futility of your general argument, by touching upon a few of the places, which you think are most liable to your censure.

You observe, that neither Luke, nor Mark, nor John have mentioned the cruelty of Herod in murdering the infants of Bethlehem; and that no account is to be found of this matter in Josephus, who wrote the life of Herod; and therefore the fact recorded by Matthew is not true.—The concurrent testimony of many independent writers concerning a matter of fact unquestionably adds to it's probability; but if nothing is to be received as true, upon the testimony of a single Author, we must give up some of the best writers, and disbelieve some of the most interesting facts of antient history.

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ACCORDING to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there was only an interval of three months, you say, between the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus; from which time taking away the forty days of the temptation, there will only remain about six weeks for the whole period of his public ministry; which lasted however according to St. John, at the least above three years.—Your objection fairly stated stands thus, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in writing the history of Jesus Christ, mention the several events of his life, as following one another in continued succession, without taking notice of the times in which they happened; but is it a just conclusion from their silence, to infer that there really were no intervals of time between the transactions which they seem to have connected? Many instances might be produced from the most admired Biographers of Antiquity, in which events are related, as immediately consequent to each other, which did not happen but at very distant periods: We have an obvious example of this manner of writing it St. Matthew; who connects the preaching of John the Baptist with the return of Joseph from Egypt, though we are certain, that
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the latter event preceded the former by a great many years.

JOHN has said nothing of the institution of the Lord's supper; the other Evangelists have said nothing of the washing of the disciples' feet:—What then? are you not ashamed to produce these facts, as instances of contradiction? if omissions are contradictions, look into the history of the age of Louis the fourteenth, or into the general history of M. de Voltaire, and you will meet with a great abundance of contradictions.

JOHN, in mentioning the discourse which Jesus had with his mother and his beloved disciple, at the time of his crucifixion, says, that she with Mary Magdalene, stood near the cross; Matthew, on the other hand, says, that Mary Magdalene and the other women were there, beholding afar off: This you think a manifest contradiction; and scoffingly inquire, whether the women and the beloved disciple, which were near the cross, could be the same with those, who stood far from the cross?—It is difficult not to transgress the bounds of moderation and good manners, in answering such sophistry;

phistry; what! have you to learn, that though the Evangelists speak of the crucifixion, as of one event, it was not accomplished in one instant, but lasted several hours? And why the women, who were at a distance from the cross, might not during it's continuance, draw near the cross; or from being near the cross, might not move from the cross, is more than you can explain to either us, or yourselves. And we take from you your only refuge, by denying expressly, that the different Evangelists, in their mention of the women, speak of the same point of time.

THE Evangelists, you affirm, are fallen into gross contradictions, in their accounts of the appearances, by which Jesus manifested himself to his disciples, after his resurrection from the dead; for Matthew speaks of two, Mark of three, Luke of two, and John of four. That contradictory propositions cannot be true, is readily granted; and if you will produce the place, in which Matthew says, that Jesus Christ appeared twice and *no oftener*, it will be further granted, that he is contradicted by John, in a very material part of his narration; but

but till you do that, you must excuse me, if I cannot grant, that the Evangelists have contradicted each other in this point; for to common understandings it is pretty evident, that if Christ appeared four times, according to John's account, he must have appeared twice, according to that of Matthew and Luke, and thrice, according to that of Mark.

THE different Evangelists are not only accused of contradicting each other, but Luke is said to have contradicted himself; for in his Gospel he tells us, that Jesus ascended into heaven from Bethany; and in the Acts of the Apostles, of which he is the reputed author, he informs us, that he ascended from Mount Olivet. — Your objection proceeds either from your ignorance of geography, or your illwill to Christianity; and upon either supposition deserves our contempt: Be pleased, however, to remember for the future, that Bethany was not only the name of a town, but of a district of Mount Olivet adjoining to the town.

FROM this specimen of the contradictions, ascribed to the historians of the life of
Christ,

Christ, you may judge for yourselves, what little reason there is to reject Christianity upon their account; and how sadly you will be imposed upon (in a matter of more consequence to you than any other) if you take every thing for a contradiction, which the uncandid adversaries of Christianity think proper to call one.

BEFORE I put an end to this address, I cannot help taking notice of an argument, by which some philosophers have of late endeavoured to overturn the whole system of revelation: And it is the more necessary to give an answer to their objection, as it is become a common subject of philosophical conversation, especially amongst those, who have visited the continent. The objection tends to invalidate, as is supposed, the authority of Moses; by shewing, that the earth is much older, than it can be proved to be from his account of the creation, and the scripture chronology. We contend, that six thousand years have not yet elapsed, since the creation; and these philosophers contend, that they have indubitable proof of the earth's being at the least fourteen thousand years old; and they complain, that

Moses

Moses hangs as a dead weight upon them; and blunts all their zeal for inquiry*.

THE Canonico Recupero, who, it seems; is engaged in writing the history of mount Etna, has discovered a stratum of Lava; which flowed from that mountain, according to his opinion, in the time of the second Punic war, or about two thousand years ago; this stratum is not yet covered with soil, sufficient for the production of either corn or vines; it requires then, says the Canon, two thousand years, at least, to convert a stratum of lava into a fertile field. In sinking a pit near *Jaci*, in the neighbourhood of Etna, they have discovered evident marks of seven distinct lavas, one under the other; the surfaces of which are parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth; now, the eruption, which formed the lowest of these lavas, (if we may be allowed to reason, says the Canon, from analogy,) flowed from the mountain at least fourteen thousand years ago.— It might be briefly answered to this objection, by denying, that there is any thing in the history of Moses repugnant to this opi-

* Brydone's Travels.

nion concerning the great antiquity of the earth; for though the rise and progress of arts and sciences, and the small multiplication of the human species, render it almost to a demonstration probable, that man has not existed longer upon the surface of this earth, than according to the Mosaic account; yet, that the earth itself was then created out of nothing, when man was placed upon it, is not, according to the sentiments of some philosophers, to be proved from the original text of sacred scripture; we might, I say, reply, with these philosophers, to this formidable objection of the Canon, by granting it in its full extent; we are under no necessity, however, of adopting their opinion, in order to shew the weakness of the Canon's reasoning. For, in the first place, the Canon has not satisfactorily established his main fact, that the lava in question, is the identical lava, which Diodorus Siculus mentions to have flowed from Etna, in the second Carthaginian war; and in the second place, it may be observed, that the time necessary for converting lavas into fertile fields, must be very different, according to the different consistencies of the lavas, and their different situations, with
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respect to elevation or depression; to their being exposed to winds, rains, and to other circumstances; just as the time, in which the heaps of iron slag (which resembles lava) are covered with verdure, is different at different furnaces, according to the nature of the slag, and situation of the furnace; and something of this kind is deducible from the account of the Canon himself; since the crevices of this famous stratum are really full of rich, good soil, and have pretty large trees growing in them.

BUT if all this should be thought not sufficient to remove the objection, I will produce the Canon an analogy in opposition to his analogy, and which is grounded on more certain facts. Etna and Vesuvius resemble each other, in the causes which produce their eruptions, and in the nature of their lavas, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation; or if there be any slight difference in this respect, it is probably not greater than what subsists between different lavas of the same mountain. This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, the Canon's analogy

will prove just nothing at all, if we can produce an instance of seven different lavas (with interjacent strata of vegetable earth) which have flowed from mount Vesuvius, within the space, not of fourteen thousand, but of somewhat less than seventeen hundred years; for then, according to our analogy, a stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil, in about two hundred and fifty years, instead of requiring two thousand for the purpose. The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, is rendered still more famous by the death of Pliny, recorded by his nephew, in his letter to Tacitus; this event happened in the year 79; it is not yet then quite seventeen hundred years, since Herculaneum was swallowed up: But we are informed by unquestionable authority, that “the matter which covers the antient town of Herculaneum, is not the produce of one eruption only; for there are evident marks, that the matter of six eruptions has taken it’s course over that which lies immediately above the town, and was the cause of it’s destruction. These strata are either of lava or burnt matter, *with veins of good soil betwixt*

twist them *."—I will not add another word upon this subject; except that the bishop of the diocese, was not much out in his advice to Canonico Recupero — to take care, not to make his mountain older than Moses; though it would have been full as well, to have shut his mouth with a reason, as to have stopped it with the dread of an ecclesiastical censure.

You perceive, with what ease a little attention will remove a great difficulty; but had we been able to say nothing in explanation of this phenomenon, we should not have acted a very rational part, in making our ignorance the foundation of our infidelity, or suffering a minute philosopher to rob us of our religion.

Your objections to revelation, may be numerous; you may find fault with the account, which Moses has given of the creation and the fall; you may not be able to get water enough for an universal deluge; nor room enough in the ark of Noah, for

* See Sir William Hamilton's Remarks upon the Nature of the Soil of Naples and it's Neighbourhood, in the Philos. Transf. Vol. lxi. p. 7.

all the different kinds of aërial and terrestrial animals; you may be dissatisfied with the command for sacrificing of Isaac, for plundering the Egyptians, and for extirpating the Canaanites; you may find fault with the Jewish œconomy, for it's ceremonies, it's sacrifices, and it's multiplicity of priests; you may object to the imprecations in the psalms, and think the immoralities of David, a fit subject for dramatic ridicule*; you may look upon the partial promulgation of Christianity, as an insuperable objection to it's truth; and waywardly reject the goodness of God toward yourselves, because you do not comprehend, how you have deserved it more than others; you may know nothing of the entrance of sin and death into the world, by one man's transgression; nor be able to comprehend the doctrine of the cross and of redemption by Jesus Christ; in short, if your mind is so disposed, you may find food for your scepticism in every page of the Bible, as well as in every appearance of nature; and it is

* See, Satil et David Hyperdrame.

Whatever censure the author of this composition may deserve for his intention, the work itself deserves none; it's ridicule is too gross, to mislead even the ignorant.

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not in the power of any person, but yourselves, to clear up your doubts; you must read, and you must think for yourselves; and you must do both with temper, with candour, and with care. Infidelity is a rank weed; it is nurtured by our vices, and cannot be plucked up as easily as it may be planted: Your difficulties with respect to revelation, may have first arisen, from your own reflection on the religious indifference of those, whom from your earliest infancy, you have been accustomed to revere, and imitate; domestic irreligion may have made you a willing hearer of libertine conversation; and the uniform prejudices of the world, may have finished the business, at a very early age; and left you to wander through life, without a principle to direct your conduct, and to die without hope. We are far from wishing you to trust the word of the Clergy for the truth of your religion; we beg of you to examine it to the bottom, to try it, to prove it, and not to hold it fast unless you find it good. Till you are disposed to undertake this task, it becomes you to consider with great seriousness and attention, whether it can be for your interest to esteem a few witty sarcasms,

or metaphysic subtleties, or ignorant misrepresentations, or unwarranted assertions, as unanswerable arguments against revelation; and a very slight reflection will convince you, that it will certainly be for your reputation, to employ the flippancy of your rhetoric, and the poignancy of your ridicule, upon any subject, rather than upon the subject of Religion.

I TAKE my leave with recommending to your notice, the advice which Mr. Locke gave to a young man, who was desirous of becoming acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion. "Study the holy scripture, especially the new Testament: Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for it's author; Salvation for it's end; and Truth without any mixture of error for it's matter*."

I am, &c.

* Locke's Posth. Works.

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L E T T E R

TO HIS GRACE THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

PRINTED IN 1783.

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L E T T E R, &c.

MY LORD,

YOUR Grace, by consecrating me a Bishop, has not encreased my zeal to serve the cause of Christianity, but you have afforded me a better opportunity of doing it, than I could possibly have had as a private man; for this address, which it might have been thought great presumption in me to have offered before, may now, I hope, be presented to your Grace, without my incurring the imputation of intruding into matters not appertaining to my situation in life.

It would be doing great injustice to your Grace's well-known candour and regard for every thing respecting the good of the Church, to entertain the least doubt of your
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giving an unprejudiced attention to what I have to offer; but to conciliate a similar attention from minds less liberally disposed, it may be necessary to declare, which I now do, in the most solemn manner, that I have no private view, direct or indirect, in what I am about to propose: Nor is the matter now hastily conceived by me, in consequence of my promotion, nor introduced from a silly vanity of being looked upon as a Reformer; a character which in all ages has met with as much detraction as praise; but it has long dwelt upon my mind; I have revolved it in various ways; I have canvassed it in conversation, *inter Syllvas Academicas*, with men of disinterested probity, true Christian simplicity, and excellent erudition; and from the most serious conviction of duty, I am emboldened to make the attempt of promoting, as in my conscience I am persuaded, the interests of the Christian Religion, and the true dignity of the Established Church.— These, it may be said, and it is truly said, are but different expressions for the same thing; for there can be no true dignity in any Church Establishment, except what is derived to it from its being the most useful mean of inculcating the
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the religion of Christ. Without taking upon me to find fault with other modes of Church Government, I profess an unfeigned regard for our own, and should be as ready as any man in opposing any attempts to subvert it, not from any mean attention to it's emoluments, but from a firm persuasion of it's utility.

I know not whether it may be worth while in this place, to take notice of a paltry censure, which is sometimes openly, often covertly, always, I trust, unjustly passed on the Zeal which the Clergy profess for the Church Establishment; it is said to be a zeal resembling that of *Demetrius*, the Clergy are suspected of crying up the Establishment, lest the *craft* by which they have their livelihood should be *set at naught*. Sordid and illiberal imputation! The Clergy of England have a zeal for the Church of England, but they have a greater zeal for the Church of Christ: There are few of them, I hope, who would scruple professing a wish, that the pure banner of the gospel may, if need shall so require, be displayed triumphant on the ruins of every Church Establishment in Christendom. What if there

there was no Establishment? — Those who are now bred to the Church, would apply their money, their time, and their talents in some other way: And there are few ways, in which they might not be able to procure for themselves, and for their families, as good, or a better provision, than they at present derive from the Church. We see, in the course of every century, a great many ample fortunes accumulated, and obscure families ennobled, by the profession of the Law, by the Army, by the Navy, and by Commerce; but it is a rare thing indeed to see a Churchman, in consequence of his profession, lifting his posterity above the common level, either in rank or fortune. And yet there can be no presumption in supposing, that men brought up to the Church have as sound understandings as those who are brought up to the Bar; the same industry, genius, or ability of any kind, which contribute to place a man on the Bench of Bishops, might, if they had been directed into another channel, have placed him on the Bench of Judges; and he whose head is covered with an Archiepiscopal Mitre, might have been adorned with the more substantial and permanent honours usually
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conferred on a Lord High Chancellor.—
But to return.

LET me intreat your Grace not to suffer the mere term *Innovation* to alarm your apprehension, either for the peace of the Community, or the safety of the Church Establishment; the writer would have thrown his pen into the fire, and his proposals after it, if there had been the most distant tendency in them to disturb either. I know it is commonly said, that wise and good men look upon every attempt to reform what is amiss, either in Church or State, as a matter of dangerous tendency: But it may be justly doubted, whether there is not as much timidity as wisdom, as much indolence as goodness in this caution; certain I am, that if *Luther* and the Reformers had been men of such dispositions, the Church of Christ would never have been purged in any degree, by them at least, from it's Antichristian corruptions. The medical maxim, *Malum bene positum ne moveto*, merits the observance of the Physician of the Body Politick, as well as of the Body Natural.—I readily acknowledge that it does so:— But when the
Evil,

Evil, though unobserved, is really rankling in the heart, depraving the noblest parts, and insensibly undermining the whole constitution, it is the business of them both, unless they will be deemed bunglers, to accomplish it's removal. "My son, says *Salomon*, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them who are given to change."—Agreed again:—God forbid that either your Grace or I should meddle with them who would wish us to change our fear of God into impiety; our reverence for the King and Constitution, into Anarchy and Rebellion. But there is neither Sin nor Shame, I apprehend, in meddling with those who would wish to make such a little change in the Church Establishment as would, with the blessing of God, produce a great change for the better in the faith and manners of the whole community.

To keep your Grace no longer in suspense as to the meaning of this address, I have two proposals to make to you; one respects the Revenues of the Bishops; the other those of the inferior Clergy; both of them tending to the same end; — *not a parity*

city of preferments, but a better apportioned distribution of what the State allows for the maintenance of the established clergy.

To begin with the Bishopricks—It would be an easy matter to display much erudition, in tracing the history of the Establishment of the several Archbishopricks and Bishopricks, which now subsist in England and Wales; but as the investigation would tend very little, if at all, to the illustration of the subject we are upon, I will not mispend either your Grace's leisure or my own in making it. Whatever was the primary occasion of it, the fact is certain—that the Revenues of the Bishopricks are very unequal in value, and that there is a great inequality also in the Patronage appertaining to the different Sees. The first proposal which I humbly submit to your Grace's deliberation, is the utility of bringing a Bill into Parliament—to render the Bishopricks more equal to each other, both with respect to income and patronage, by annexing part of the Estates, and part of the preferments of the richer Bishopricks, *as they become vacant*, to the poorer.—Your Grace will observe, that here is no injury proposed to be done

done to the present possessors of the richer Bishopricks; let them enjoy in peace the Emoluments which their great deservings, or great good fortunes have procured for them; and as to that disappointment of expectation which some men may suffer, it is of too vague a value to be estimated, it is too strange a species of property to be valued at all. Before your Grace's mind can suggest to you the difficulties of accomplishing such a design, or the other objections which may, probably, be made to it, allow me to point out some of the Advantages, which I think would certainly attend it.

I. BY a Bill of this kind, the poorer Bishops would be freed from the necessity of holding Ecclesiastical preferments *in commendam* with their Bishopricks; a practice which bears hard upon the rights and expectations of the rest of the Clergy; which is disagreeable to the Bishops themselves; which exposes them to much, perhaps, undeserved obloquy, but which certainly had better not subsist in the Church. I do not take upon me to fix the precise sum which would enable a Bishop, not to pollute Gospel Humility with the Pomp of Prelacy,
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not to emulate the Noble and Opulent in such luxurious and expensive levities as become neither Churchmen nor Christians; but to maintain such a decent establishment in the world as would give weight to his example, and authority to his admonition; to make such a moderate provision for his children, as their father's mode of living would give them some little right to expect; and to recommend his religion by works of Charity, to the serious examination of unbelievers of every denomination. The Sum requisite for these purposes admits of great latitude; some would think that it ought to be more, others that it ought to be less than the Salaries of the Judges; but the revenues of the Bishopricks, if more equally divided, would, probably, be sufficient to afford to each Bishop a sum, not much different from a Judge's salary; and they would do this even supposing that it should be thought right, to make no defalcation from the present incomes of the two Archbishopricks. But whether the Incomes of the Bishops should, by the proposed alteration, be made a little greater or a little less than those of the Judges, still would they

they be sufficient for the purpose of rendering *Commendams* wholly unnecessary.

2. A SECOND consequence of the Bill proposed, would be a greater independence of the Bishops in the House of Lords.—I know that many will be startled, I beg them not to be offended, at the surmise of the Bishops not being independent in the House of Lords; and it would be easy enough to weave a logical cobweb, large enough and strong enough to cover and protect the conduct of the Right Reverend Bench from the attacks of those who dislike Episcopacy. This I say would be an easy task, but it is far above my ability to eradicate from the minds of others, (who are, notwithstanding, as well attached to the Church Establishment as ourselves,) a suspicion, that the prospect of being translated influences the minds of the Bishops too powerfully, and induces them to pay too great an attention to the beck of a Minister. I am far from saying or thinking, that the Bishops of the present age are more obsequious in their attention to Ministers than their Predecessors have been, or that the Spiritual Lords are
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the only Lords who are liable to this suspicion, or that Lords in general, are the only persons on whom expectation has an influence; but the suspicion, whether well or ill founded, is disreputable to our order; and, what is of worse consequence, it hinders us from doing that good which we otherwise might do; for the Laity, whilst they entertain such a suspicion concerning us, will accuse us of Avarice and Ambition, of making a gain of Godliness, of bartering the dignity of our Office for the chance of a translation, in one word of—Secularity—; and against that Accusation they are very backward in allowing the Bishops or the Clergy in general, such kind of defence as they would readily allow to any other class of Men, any other denomination of Christians, under the similar circumstances, of large families and small fortunes. Instead then of quibbling and disputing against the existence of a Minister's influence over us, or recriminating and retorting the petulance of those who accuse us on that account, let us endeavour to remove the Evil; or, if it must not be admitted that this evil has any real existence, let us endeavour to remove the appearance of it. A Bill of the kind

here proposed would be effectual to this purpose. For though it might be difficult to render the Revenues of the different Sees precisely equal to each other; though it might be proper that the Bishops of such laborious Dioceses as *London*, *Lincoln*, and *Chester*, should be somewhat better provided for than those of *Durham*, *Winchester*, and *Ely*; since it is a maxim of Scripture that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and of common sense that the hire should be proportioned to the labour; though this, I say, might be proper, yet the disparity of Income and Patronage might be made so small, or so appertioned to the labour, that few Bishops, unless for local considerations, would be disposed to wish for translations, and consequently would, in appearance as well as in reality, be Independent.—But in rendering the Bishops independent, you will reduce the influence of the Crown in the House of Lords.—I do not mean to deny this charge; nay, I am willing to admit it in it's full extent; and as this admission may operate on the minds of some good men, as a solid Objection to the plan itself; and may afford matter of secret slander; or open calumny against the proposer of it; I will

will trespass upon your Grace's patience with a short, but at the same time with a full and sincere explanation of my opinion on that head; for I should think myself utterly unworthy the favour I have received from his Majesty, and the sacred Office to which I have been appointed, if either fear of offending, or expectation of pleasing, or any other consideration on earth, could influence me to disguise my sentiments, on any subject of civil or religious Importance. With respect then to the influence of the Crown, here alluded to, I have considered it in the following manner.

IN the embarrassing situations of private life, we all acknowledge the propriety, and feel the utility, of consulting, not humble and pliant dependents, but sensible and independent friends: When our own understandings are distracted by doubts, heated by resentment, instigated by ambition, depressed by despair, or deranged and distempered by the violence of any affection, the advice of an honest, independent, and dispassionate friend, is of the greatest use; it may often, at the moment of it's being given, be very unpalatable, but it is always

salutary, and we seldom fail to repent the not having taken it. It is the misfortune of men in elevated situations, that they seldom meet with friends who will speak plainly to them, or attempt to stop their career of folly or extravagance; the fear of offending cramps the disposition for advising; many a great estate has been foolishly dissipated, many a fair character undone, by the timid forbearance, the interested acquiescence of expecting dependents; which might have been preserved intire and unfulled, by the firm remonstrance of an honest friend. This observation is certainly as applicable to the concerns of public as of private life; the advice of an independent Parliament is as serviceable to the Crown, as that of an independent friend is to an individual. We know by whom it was said, *where no counsel is the people fall: But in the multitude of Counsellors there is safety*; and we know too, that the wise king who said it, would have said no such thing, had he suspected that an external influence, rather than an internal conviction, would have rendered his multitude of Counsellors all of the same mind. The principles of those who have spoken against the influence of the

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the Crown, have been either much misunderstood, or much misrepresented; they have been accused, by sly innuendos, of designing to ruin the constitution by lowering the prerogative; of wishing to introduce the most tyrannous (in my apprehension) of all Governments, a Republic, in the room of a limited Monarchy. For my own part, and I verily believe I am far from being singular in my notions, I take this opportunity of publicly declaring to your Grace, what I have a thousand times before declared to my friends in private, that I never entertained the most distant desire, of seeing either the Democratical, or the Aristocratical scale of the Constitution, outweigh the Monarchical; not one jot of the legal prerogative did I ever wish to see abolished; not one tittle of the King's influence in the State to be destroyed, except so far as it was extended over the deliberations of the Hereditary Counsellors of the Crown, or the Parliamentary Representatives of the people. I own I have wished, and I own (with a heart as loyal as the loyalest) that I shall continue to wish, that an influence of this kind may be diminished; because I firmly believe that it's diminution will, eventually,

tend to the conservation of the genuine constitution of our country; to the honour of his Majesty's Government; to the stability of the Hanover succession; and to the promotion of the public good. Had the influence here spoken of been less predominant of late years; had the measures of the Cabinet been canvassed by the wisdom, and tempered by the moderation of men exercising their free powers of deliberation for the common weal, the brightest jewel of his Majesty's crown had not now been tarnished; the strongest limb of the British Empire had not now been rudely severed from its parent stock. I make not this remark with a view of criminating any set of Ministers, (for the best may be mistaken in their judgments, and errors which are past should be forgotten, buried in the zeal of all parties to rectify the mischiefs they have occasioned) but simply to shew, by a recent example, that the influence of the Crown when exerted by the *Cabinet*, over the *Public Counsellors* of the King, is a circumstance so far from being to be wished by his true friends, that it is as dangerous to the real interests and honour of the Crown itself, as it is odious to the people, and destructive of
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public liberty; it may contribute to keep a prime Minister in his place contrary to the sense of the wisest and best part of the community; it may contribute to keep the King himself unacquainted with his People's wishes, but it cannot do the King or the State any service. To maintain the contrary is to satyrize his Majesty's Government, it is to insinuate that his views and interests are so disjoined from those of his people, that they cannot be effectuated by the uninfluenced concurrence of honest men. It is far beneath the Character of a great and an upright Monarch, to be suspected of a desire to carry any plans of Government into execution in opposition to the Sentiments of a free and enlightened Parliament; and the Minister who should be base enough to advise him to adopt such an arbitrary system of Government, or should supply the corrupted means of carrying it on, would deserve the execration of every man of integrity, and would, probably, sooner or later, meet with the deserved detestation of the Prince himself. It is of such Men as these — there is no impropriety, I hope, in borrowing truth from tragedy, since *Chryso-
stom* is said to have slept with even an
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Aristophanes under his pillow; it is of such men as these the Poet speaks,

It is the curse of Kings, to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant;
And who, to be endeared to a King,
Make no conscience to destroy his *honour*.

In a word, if there be any one measure more likely than another to preserve pure and unblemished the honour of the Crown; to secure it's most valuable rights; to procure for it warm, bold, determined friends, who in the hour of danger would support it at the hazard of their lives against foreign or domestic insult; I verily believe it to be, the establishing, as much as possible, the independency of the several Members of *both* Houses of Parliament. If I am wrong in this opinion, I should be glad to be set right, my mind, I trust, is open to conviction, and disposed to follow truth wherever it may be found; but whilst this is my opinion, your Grace may be assured that I cannot admit the circumstance, of the Bishops being rendered independent in the House of Lords, as any real Objection to the plan proposed; on the contrary, I think it a very strong Argument in it's favour; so strong
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an one, that if there was no other, it would be sufficient to sanctify the measure. The Bishops have, on trying occasions, been fast friends to the Crown; they have, on trying occasions also, been fast friends to the liberties of the people; and they would not, in my humble opinion, become worse friends to either King or People, from their being rendered independent of them both.

3. A THIRD probable effect, of the proposed plan, would be a longer residence of the Bishops in their respective Dioceses; from which the best consequences might be expected. When the temptations to wish for translations were in a great measure removed, it would be natural for the Bishops, in general, to consider themselves as settled for life, in the Sees to which they should be first appointed; this consideration would induce them to render their places of residence more comfortable and commodious; and an opportunity of living more comfortably, would beget an inclination to live more constantly in them. Being wedded as it were to a particular Diocese, they would think it expedient to become, and they would
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would of course become better acquainted with their Clergy; and by being better acquainted with the situations, prospects, tempers, and talents of their Clergy, they would be better able to co-operate with them, in the great work of amending the Morals of his Majesty's subjects, and of feeding the flock of Christ. It is the duty of Christian Pastors in general, and of the principal Shepherds particularly, *to strengthen that member of the flock which is diseased, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken, to bring again that which is driven away, and to seek that which is lost*: That these and other parts of the pastoral office can never be so well performed, as when the Shepherd is resident in the midst of his flock, can admit of no question. The manners of the English Bishops are (I trust I speak rightly — I am certain I mean not to speak flatteringly) as pure and irreprehensible as those of any other Prelates in Europe; and as the world in general lives more according to fashion than reason, it is not easy to conceive what beneficial influence the Examples of the Bishops, residing in their Dioceses, and letting their light shine before

before men who would be disposed to observe it, would have on the lives and conversations of both Clergy and Laity.

I HAVE long considered the Clergy who are dispersed through the kingdom, as a little leaven preserving, from extreme corruption, the whole mass; and the great kindness and respect, with which the whole order is treated by the best and most enlightened part of the Laity, is a proof that they consider them in the same light. Your Grace's candour and moderation will excuse me, if in this commendation I include the Dissenting Clergy, whom I cannot look upon as inferior to the Clergy of the Establishment, either in learning or morals. It is owing principally to the teaching and example of the Clergy in general, that there is not more infidelity in the highest, more immorality in the lowest classes of the community; but there would, probably, be less of both, if we were all of us, in the words of Bishop Burnet, addressed to George I. "obliged to live and to labour more suitably to our profession." It may be urged, that the attendance of the Bishops in the House of Lords, is inconsistent with the residence
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here spoken of—in no wise—; a longer residence does not imply a continual residence; in the course of the year opportunity enough may be found to let the State have, on important occasions, the benefit of their Advice; and their Dioceses, on most occasions, the benefit of their inspection; and they will be best able to judge for themselves where, at any particular time; their presence will be of most use.

SOME, I doubt not, will be ready enough to think, that the State would receive little injury by the perpetual absence of the Bishops from the House of Lords.—I see no reason for thinking, that it would not receive as much injury from the absence of six and twenty independent Spiritual Peers, as from the absence of an equal number of Temporal Peers of any order. The Bench of Bishops is composed, either of the younger branches of Noble Families, or of Men who are sprung from what the old Barons would call no Ancestry; but why should it be thought, that the understandings of either of these sorts of Men, are a whit inferior to those of the Temporal Lords? The Bishops of Noble Blood have, unquestionably,
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had as good opportunities of mental improvement; and have, probably, made as proper an use of them, as their elder brothers, uncles, or cousins have done; and it would be a miserable affectation of modesty, a base adulation of the Nobility, to admit, that the plebeians who have raised themselves to the Bench, are inferior to their honourable or right honourable Brethren, in learning or sagacity, in judgment or integrity, in any one qualification requisite to constitute a Man an useful Counsellor, in concerns Ecclesiastical or Civil.

I HAVE now briefly mentioned some of the advantages which would attend the proposed change in the value of the Bishopricks, and endeavoured to obviate what some will be inclined to think main objections to the making it. As to the difficulties which might attend the execution of it, they are neither many nor great, I profess that I see none, but what might easily be overcome, without doing the least injury to any one, by the good sense and the good temper of a Committee of Spiritual and Temporal Lords, invested with full powers to make proper inquiries, and heartily disposed towards the
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business. To enter into a description of particulars, when there may be a chance that the general outline will be disapproved, would be equally irksome to your Grace and to myself: If I had leisure, I should want inclination, to spend more of my time than is necessary in delineating a scheme, which either the more comprehensive wisdom, or the more efficient prejudices of other men, may quash at once, by pronouncing it useless, impolitic, or impracticable.

THE second thing which I have to recommend to your Grace's attention is the introduction of a Bill into Parliament. — For appropriating, *as they become vacant*, one third or some other definite part, of the Income of every Deanery, Prebend or Canonry, of the Churches of Westminster, Windsor, Christchurch, Canterbury, Worcester, Durham, Norwich, Ely, Peterborough, Carlisle, &c. to the same purposes, *mutatis mutandis*, as the First Fruits and Tenths were appropriated by the Act passed in the fifth of Queen Anne. Dignities which after this deduction would not yield one hundred a year, should not, I think, be meddled with.

with.—If any one, in the outset of this inquiry, should be forward to object; that many of these Preferments, being in the Patronage of the Crown, ought not to be lessened without his Majesty's especial consent; let such an one know, that there is no wish to lessen them without that consent; but this consent, we are certain, will not be withheld if the proposal shall appear to his Majesty to be for the credit of the Church, and the good of his Subjects; and God prevent it's taking effect if it will not be for both.

THIS proposal will, I am sensible, be very differently received by different sorts of men: Some will consider it as an attack upon the Hierarchy, as tending to lower the Church Establishment; others will think that it does not go far enough, they will prefer levelling to lowering, the abolition of Deans and Chapters to their reduction. So much may reasonably be said on both sides, that I cannot, on this occasion, stop to say any thing on either side; and my business indeed, is not so much with Deans and Chapters, as with a very useful, with what some will not scruple to call the most useful part of the

Clergy—the Parochial Clergy. The general provision for this class of men, is so exceedingly scanty and mean, that there surely can be no impropriety in wishing, that it may be increased; especially when the increase is proposed to be made, without either reclaiming any part of the Church Property, which was by strange means enough conveyed into Lay hands; or imposing any new burdens on the community in general; or taking from any one of the Clergy the least part of what he is at present possessed of.

THE Revenue of the Church of England is not, I think, well understood in general; at least I have met with a great many very sensible men, of all professions and ranks, who did not understand it. They have expressed a surprize, bordering on disbelief, when I have ventured to assure them, that the whole income of the Church, including Bishopricks, Deans and Chapters, Rectories, Vicarages, Dignities and Benefices of all kinds, and even the two Universities with their respective Colleges, which being Lay Corporations ought not to be taken into the account, did not amount, upon the most liberal

liberal calculation, to 1500000l. a year. I will not trouble your Grace with the manner of making this calculation, but I have good reason to believe it to be near the truth, it is certainly near enough for the inference which I wish to draw from it, which is simply this, — that if we had no Bishops to inspect and govern the Church; no Deaneries, Prebends, or Canonries to stimulate the Clergy to excel in literary attainments; no Universities or Colleges (which with all their faults are the best Seminaries of Education in Europe) to instruct our youth; nothing but Parochial Clergy, and all of these provided for by an equal partition, notwithstanding the great inequality of their merits, of the present Ecclesiastical Revenues, there would not be, estimating the number of the Clergy at ten thousand, above 150l. a year for each individual. I would not be understood to affect a mathematical precision in this matter, the subject would admit it, but the present *data* are not sufficient to enable any person to make it; but whether we suppose an officiating Minister to have 120l. or 150l. a year, it is a sum not much to be envied him. Apothecaries and Attornies, in very mode-

rate practice, make as much by their respective professions; without having been at the same expences with the Clergy in their Educations, and without being, like them, prohibited by the laws of their Country, from bettering their circumstances, by uniting to the Emoluments of their professions, the profits resulting from farming or any kind of trade.

I do not introduce these remarks, in this place, with any intention of finding fault with the State, for it's not having made a better provision for it's Clergy; but merely with a view of rectifying the misconceptions, removing the prejudices, and lessening the envy of many, otherwise well-disposed persons, towards the Church Establishment. The whole Provision for the Church is as low as it can be, unless the State will be contented with a beggarly and illiterate Clergy, too mean and contemptible to do any good either by precept or example, unless it will condescend to have Taylors and Coblers for it's Pastors and Teachers. There are several, no doubt, who looking upon the Christian religion as an imposture, and the Clergy as an hive of hypocritical drones,

drones, would be willing enough to assist any needy minister in plucking from the Church a part or the whole of it's possessions, provided by such a plunder they could preserve their own from depredation; with these men I cannot argue, not because they are not Christians, but because they are as ignorant of the Science of Government as of Christianity; and it is the less necessary to enter into any discussion of their principles, as they are not likely to be adopted by any minister, who understands the use of religion in enforcing morality, and the use of good morals in securing the welfare of the community; but if any short-sighted minister, in order to serve a turn, to stop some rotten hole in his administration, should be found hardy or silly enough to adopt them; we may be well persuaded that the King and the Parliament would have wisdom and goodness enough to check his folly and counteract his designs; they would say to him in the Language of the late Lord Chatham — “the Church (God bless it!) has but a pittance.” — Nor is this pittance itself to be enviously regarded, as the hereditary property of any particular class of people, it does not belong to the Tribe of



Levi; we none of us lay claim to any part of it in consequence of our being descended from this or that family. The property of the church is the real property of those who at present possess it, but it may be esteemed the reversionary property of every family in the Kingdom; it is somewhat that every man has a title to, over and above that which he can produce his Parchments for. Look at the possessors of Bishopricks, Deaneries, Prebends, Rectories and all the other Emoluments of the Church, and you will find them descended from the Nobility, the Gentry, the Commonalty, from all ranks, professions, and orders, of the State. I say again the property of the Church ought to be considered as the property of the Kingdom at large; I do not mean, inasmuch as it is a part of the Kingdom which is given to the Church by the common or the statute Law of the Kingdom; but as the individuals who enjoy it, are or may be, in a succession of years, taken from every family in the Kingdom,

BUT though the whole Revenue of the Church is so inconsiderable, as not to admit any diminution of it; yet a somewhat
better

better distribution of it might be introduced with much, it is apprehended, advantage to the State, and without the least injustice to any individual. I know some men who are of opinion that it would be useful to the State to reduce all the clergy, as nearly as possible, to the same level, both in rank and fortune; I wonder that they do not think it would be useful to the State, to reduce all the Officers in the Navy and Army, to the rank and income of Lieutenants and Ensigns. But Doctor *Bentley* has so well considered this subject in his *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, that I cannot do better than quote the passage—“As for the Cheapness [of the Priesthood] that appeared lately in one of your Parliaments; when the accounts exhibited shewed, that 6000 of your Clergy, the greater part of your whole number, had at a middle rate one with another not 50 l. a year. A poor emolument for so long, so laborious, so expensive an education, as must qualify them for Holy Orders. While I resided at *Oxford*, and saw such a conflux of youth to their Annual Admissions; I have often studied and admired, why their parents would under such mean encouragements design their sons for the Church;

and those the most towardly and capable and select geniuses among their children; who must needs have emerged in a secular Life. I congratulated indeed the felicity of your Establishment, which attracted the choice youth of your nation for so very low pay: But my wonder was at the Parents, who generally have interest, maintenance, and wealth, the first thing in their view: Till at last one of your State Lotteries ceased my astonishment. For as in that, a few glittering prizes, of 1000, 5000 and 10000 pounds among an infinity of blanks, drew troops of adventurers, who, if the whole fund had been equally ticketed would never have come in: So a few shining Dignities in your Church, Prebends, Deaneries, Bishopricks, are the *pious fraud* that induces and decoys the Parents, to risk their children's fortune in it. Every one hopes his own will get some great prize in the Church, and never reflects on the thousands of blanks in poor Country Livings. And if a Foreigner may tell you his mind from what he sees at home; it is this part of your Establishment that makes your Clergy excel ours. Do but once level all your Preferments, and you will soon be as level in your
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Learning. For instead of the flower of the *English* youth, you will have only the refuse sent to your Academies; and those too cramped and crippled in their Studies for want of Aim and Emulation, so that if your Free-thinkers had any Politics, instead of suppressing your whole order, they should make you all alike." In this passage Doctor *Bentley* appeals to some accounts, which had been exhibited to Parliament, probably by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, stating the great number of small Livings. It may not be improper to bring to your Grace's recollection what some other eminent men have said on the subject.

BISHOP *Kennet*, in his *Case of Impropriations*, quotes a petition, drawn up by the direction of Archbishop *Whitgift*, to Queen *Elizabeth* in the forty-third year of her reign, in which there is the following clause — "of eight thousand eight hundred and odd Benefices with Cure, there are not six hundred sufficient for learned men." What the Archbishop thought sufficient for a learned man does not appear in this place, but it appears in another, that he did not think 30 l. *de claro*, was enough even in his time,
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“ seeing the tenth part of the Benefices are not severally competent for a mean person, nor the twentieth part estimated to be worth 30 l. *de claro*, this restraint [of Pluralities] will deprive the far greatest part of Learned Ministers of sufficient maintenance.” A great many livings have been much improved since the reign of Elizabeth; but the improvements have principally been made in Rectories; the Vicarages have many of them been rather diminished in value, in consequence of the change which had taken place in the value of money; for many of them have little or no Endowment, except a fixed payment out of the Tythes, which, on the dissolution of the Monasteries, came into the hands of Lay or Spiritual persons — Doctor *Warner*, in the Appendix to his Ecclesiastical History, published in 1757, has the following observation — “ of the nine thousand and some hundred Churches and Chapels which we have in England and Wales, six thousand — I speak from the best authority — are not above the value of forty pounds a year.” — Lastly, Doctor *Burn*, has stated the number of small livings, (in his Ecclesiastical Law, Article First Fruits and Tenths) in the following terms — “ the
number

number of Livings capable of augmentation hath been certified as follows; 1071 livings not exceeding 10 l. a year; 1467 livings above 10 l. and not exceeding 20 l. a year; 1126 livings above 20 l. and not exceeding 30 l. a year; 1049 livings above 30 l. and not exceeding 40 l. a year; 884 livings above 40 l. and not exceeding 50 l. a year. So that in the whole there are 5597 livings certified under 50 l. a year." There is some difference in these last two accounts, as to the number of livings under 50 l. a year, but let us take which account we please, the wretched provision for the Parochial Clergy, may be inferred from it. It is readily acknowledged also, that things are not so bad now as they were when the return of Livings was first made to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty; in the course of near 70 years a great many livings have been augmented by that Bounty; but the Bounty, assisted by private benefactions, has been found quite inadequate to the end, of making a reasonable provision for the Parochial Clergy in a short time. Dr. *Warner* says on this head, "It will be 500 years before every living can be raised to 60 l. a year by Queen Anne's Bounty, supposing the

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the same money to be distributed as there has been for some years past." And *Dr. Burn* assures us that, "computing the clear amount of the bounty to make 55 augmentations yearly, it will be 339 years from the year 1714 (which was the first year in which any augmentations were made (before all the said livings can exceed 50 l. a year. And if it be computed that half of such augmentations may be made in conjunction with other benefactors) which is improbable,) it will require 226 years before all the livings already certified will exceed 50 l. a year."

ENOUGH has been said concerning the poverty of the greatest part of our Parochial Churches and Chapels; it is a fact not known, I believe, by many of the Laity; felt, however, by many deserving Clergy; and lamented, it is to be hoped, by all of us, who have been fortunate enough to obtain better situations in the Establishment; fortunate enough I must be allowed to call it, for there are many amongst the poorest of the Parochial Clergy, whose merits as Scholars, as Christians, and as men, would be no disgrace to the most deserving Prelate
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on the Bench. The plan I have the honour of presenting to your Grace, would remedy this defect in our Establishment in no long course of years; it would produce a wonderful change for the better, in fourscore or an hundred years, in the condition of the inferior Clergy. It would immediately begin to operate for their benefit, though it's operation would not be complete, till all those who are possessed of the Dignities in question were gathered to their fathers: Thirty or forty years are a long period when considered as a part of the life of an individual, but they are nothing when considered as part of the existence of a community; no dislike, therefore, should be conceived against the proposal, from it's not being instantly attended by it's utmost possible utility; that could not be effected, without depriving of their property the present possessors of these dignities; a measure too full of injustice and cruelty to be thought of, except by selfish Enthusiasts in times of public confusion. If the plan is adopted we ourselves shall feel it's good effects in part, and our posterity will feel them in full perfection. The dignities though thus diminished, would still be great objects to the
Clergy,

Clergy, great enough, *if properly bestowed*, to procure the exertion of the most distinguished talents in the Service of Learning and Religion.

I MUST not omit taking notice of one Objection which will, probably, be made to this plan: It will be said — That it will be the occasion of too large a portion of the Lands of the Kingdom being held in *Mortmain*. — I should be sorry to be found wading out of my depth; but I will venture to say that I see no foundation for this Objection; and what is more, that I should not see any weight in it, if it had the surest foundation. I sincerely beg pardon of the great Luminaries of the law if, in this matter, I am in an error; the reasons which have led me into this error, if it be one, are such as follow. — In the first place, I see no foundation for the objection; because I look upon the landed income of the Church, as not being, at present, equal to one sixteenth part of the landed Income of the Kingdom: And by the proposed change, the landed Income of the Church would not, in four hundred years, become equal to one tenth part of the landed Income of the Kingdom.

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But we may safely trust our Posterity, with applying their own remedy to an Evil, which will not take place till four hundred years hence.—In the second place, I do not see that it ought to be looked upon as an Evil, if it had even now taken place. Every one knows that the reasons, which induced our Ancestors to pass Statutes of *Mortmain*, restraining Corporations from purchasing of Lands, do not now subsist in the least degree. *No services that are due of such lands, and which at the beginning were provided for the defence of the realm, are wrongfully withdrawn*; the lands in the possession of Corporations furnish their proper number of hands towards the defence of the State, inasmuch as they pay their *quota* of the public taxes; and the hands which they furnish are neither torpid nor dead, but as full of life and activity as any other hands. Nor is it at this time of day pretended, that any *loss or damage redounds to the King and the Chief Lords*, by lands aliened into *Mortmain*. But though the primary reasons for passing Statutes in *Mortmain* have long ceased to exist, yet others may have arisen of equal weight and cogency; of such of these as are generally given, the disinheritance of heirs, and the

the rendering lands unalienable are the chief. As to the disherison of lawful heirs, nothing of the kind can take place in the present circumstance; for a purchase is to be made, and a full and valuable consideration is to be actually paid for the lands, to be annexed to small livings. And as to the lands being rendered unalienable, I profess I do not see how the State can be injured thereby, whilst they continue to pay as much to the State as if they were sold every year; and to yield as much annual produce by tillage, and pasturage, as any other lands of equal extent, which I have no doubt that they certainly would do: These lands, moreover, do in fact suffer a species of alienation; upon the voidance of every incumbency they are transferred to a different family: But it may be that I do not see this question in it's proper light; or *Mortmain* may be nothing but a bugbear, which wants only to be examined to be found harmless.

If after what has been advanced, this said *Mortmain* should still be considered as a reason, or adduced as a pretence, against the plan; we may get rid of the objection intirely, and that by two ways, each of which

which recommends itself by peculiar advantages.

1. By allowing the Clergy to accept of certain payments from the funds, in the place of rents from Lands held in *Mortmain*. — This, I own, is not the best manner of augmenting small livings, but it is better than not augmenting them at all; and there is little probability that, in the utmost necessities of the State, any Minister, would dare to lay his unhallowed hands on the scanty *peculium* of the poorest Clergy. The difficulty of finding proper purchases has obliged, your Grace well knows, the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, to adopt this mode of Augmentation; and this difficulty would not be lessened, by an increase of the sum of money to be laid out. The Governors of this bounty at first allowed the Clergy an Interest of 5 l. per cent. till they could find means of laying out the money, which had been allotted to their livings, in the purchase of Lands or Tithes; but within three years after the first Augmentations took place, they informed the Clergy that they would be obliged to lessen the interest they allowed them, and it was

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accordingly lessened to 4l. per cent. in 1720. This interest has been since lowered to 2l. per cent. with the same motive of inducing the Clergy to exert themselves in looking out for purchases, and there is a large sum of money vested in the funds, and charged with the payment of only 2l. per cent. to the livings which have been augmented, which would be all of it paid to the respective Clergy, to whom it is due, could they procure proper purchases. But as they have not done this, even in the present price of lands, when they might have made twice as much interest of their money, (for I look upon the money as their property) as they receive from the Corporation, it is fairly to be presumed that they could not do it; and this impossibility, by the bye, of finding purchases, should, I humbly presume, unless there be reasons to the contrary, which I do not understand, be a motive with the Corporation, to consider, whether it would not be equitable and proper, to make such a change in their rules, as would enable the present poor Clergy, whose livings have been augmented, to receive the full amount of the benefit intended for them by the Bounty of the Queen.

2. ANOTHER way of preventing any more lands from coming into *Mortmain*, in consequence of the plan here mentioned, would be the suffering the Incumbents of small livings to receive from the several Churches, whose Deaneries, &c. are proposed to be diminished, certain annual stipends. Some Deans and Chapters have, with a very laudable disinterestedness, appropriated a tenth or a larger part of their annual fines to the repairs of the Fabricks of their Churches; their Treasurer usually deducts this part at their Audits before the dividends are made, and he could with equal facility deduct from the Income of each person, which should in future become liable to such a defalcation, a third or any other assigned part, and pay it in any determined proportion (under the inspection of the Bishop of the diocese or other proper person) to the Incumbents of the small livings. By this method not only the objection as to *Mortmain* would be removed; but an objection of full as great danger both to the Church and State — the making the Clergy dependent stipendiary Pensioners of Government, by vesting their property in the funds, would be removed also. But there is still another advantage

which would attend this method, — the relief which the poor Clergy would receive from the plan would be very sensibly felt immediately, and the utmost relief which could be ever derived from it, would take place in a short time; for in the space of forty or fifty years, most or all of the present possessors of Deaneries, &c. would be dead. Suppose, for instance, that after passing an Act for appropriating the third part, of the preferments in question, to the Augmentation of small livings, there should become vacant, in the course of the first year, preferments to the amount of 3000l. a year, then would there be an opportunity of augmenting 50 livings with 20l. or 100 livings with 10l. a year each. The following year a certain number more would be augmented, and so on; more or fewer augmentations taking place every year, in proportion to the number of deaths amongst the Dignitaries, and the value of their preferments. The Augmentations from this fund, thus applied, would have their limit; but the operation of the Queen's Bounty in making all the small livings equal to 50l. a year, would hereby be wonderfully accelerated; and this rapid acceleration is no bad argument

ment in favour of this mode of distributing the sum proposed.

By either of the two methods here mentioned, the danger of having more lands come into *Mortmain* would be removed; and either of them would quiet also the apprehensions which, in the opinion of many discerning persons, might reasonably be entertained, of the Clergy's acquiring too great an influence in the State. It is certain, that influence accompanies property, and were the Clergy to get a great accession of landed property, their influence would be increased in a great degree. The time was, when the Church possessed a third part of the lands of the Kingdom; when the Clergy were united under one corrupt head, and were actuated by a spirit, very different from the spirit of meekness and christian simplicity. The present reformed Church of England is as different, I trust, in principles of conduct, from the antient Romish Church of England, as it is inferior to it in property and influence; and so far am I from blaming any man for his apprehensions of it's reverting to it's former state, that I sincerely concur with him in thinking that every ten-

dency to it should be sedulously watched, and firmly opposed. But by the last mode, which, every thing considered, may perhaps be the best, of applying the revenues taken from the Deaneries, &c. the Clergy would acquire no additional influence of any kind, for there would be no increase either of the monied or the landed property of the Church.

THERE is no need to enlarge upon the many public and private advantages, which would attend the making a better provision for the inferior Clergy; they must be obvious to every person, who will give himself the trouble to think upon the subject. A more strict injunction concerning residence, and a restriction of pluralities would be neither unreasonable nor unserviceable consequences of it.

IN the former part of this letter I declined entering into the particular mode of accomplishing the change there recommended; I must do the same here, and for the same reason.—I see no difficulties in effecting the business, if the propriety of attempting it be admitted, but others I am sensible will
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see many: This is to be expected, for we judge of things according to our dispositions, and these, Nature and Education have rendered infinitely various, between the extreme of Audacity on the one hand, which scruples not to attempt impossibilities; and the extreme of Timidity on the other, which considers the most practicable things as impossible. This I say must be expected in honest men, who are willing to do what they think ought to be done: But if private reasons should chance to render any person averse from the business, the objections to it will be multiplied beyond number, and the difficulties magnified beyond measure. For as was said by a worthy Senator, when the augmentation of small livings was formerly agitated in the House of Commons—“to him that is unwilling to go there is always a bear or a lion in the way: First let us make ourselves willing, then will the way be easy and safe enough.” Though I decline at present entering into any particulars, and omit the mention of many things which, if ever the business is proceeded in, must necessarily be taken into the Account; yet I will just give two hints, as each of them may, when properly modified, be a
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reason recommendatory of the plan itself, and that to different Classes of men. 1. It seems highly equitable, that the revenues taken from the Churches, should be first employed in augmenting, to a sum to be fixed upon, the small livings in the Patronage of these Churches; and afterwards to the augmentation of small livings in general. 2. That the sum of four or six hundred pounds (if land is to be purchased) should be added to every two hundred raised by Benefaction; as it is probable, that the prospect of making at once so large an addition to the income of a small living, would induce both the Patrons, especially those who are possessed of Improvements, and the *young* Incumbents of them, to procure such Benefactions much more commonly than is done at present.

I HASTEN to release your Grace from the trouble I have occasioned you, requesting you to take in good part, what is proposed with a good intention. The moderation of the present Age in Ecclesiastical Matters is great, when contrasted with the violence of the last; all sides have reason to rejoice at the difference; and I would have wished that

that the hand which has written this letter, had been chilled with the damp of death before it had begun it's work, if I had thought, that the business which is now broached was likely, either in itself, or in it's consequences, to be attended with any the least diminution of that moderation, with any the least loss of brotherly love, and Christian Charity. In all disputes whether between ourselves of the Establishment, or between us and our Brethren who dissent from it, the advice of a certain venerable father of the Church demands our attention, — “let us mutually give up a little, that we may receive in return a great deal, Unanimity.” This Unanimity in Matters of Opinion can, perhaps, never be obtained, but the want of it may be dispensed with, if there be an unanimity in the practice of mutual forbearance, kindness and goodwill. Having accustomed myself, for years, to look at the subjects here treated of, as of great national importance, and unquestioned utility; it is very probable that I may have undesignedly considered them with partiality, and overlooked some weighty objections which may be brought against them. If there are any such objections, they will
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certainly be discovered, and many improvements, probably, suggested, when mens' minds are turned towards the Subject; and the wish of having the subject thoroughly discussed, rather than hastily adopted, or hastily rejected, is the sole occasion of my addressing your Grace in this public manner. If any one should think, that it would have been more respectful in me to have submitted this matter privately to the judgment of your Grace and the Bench of Bishops, I must beg leave to differ from him. I have no disposition to be wanting in respect to any of my Brethren, but I cannot, out of respect to any man or set of men, give up a decided opinion, and I have not the least doubt or hesitation of mind, as to the utility of making the objects of this letter publicly known. If I had previously consulted the Bench of Bishops, I might have run the risk of treating them with apparent disrespect; for I should have been under a necessity of neglecting their advice, had it tended to the suppression of what I now offer to the deliberate and impartial examination of the Laity and Clergy in general, I moreover much dislike all private cabal-
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ling in matters of public Import; if they will not bear the broad face of day, the animadversion of men of different talents and judgments, the thorough sifting of all parties, they are not fit to be encouraged. It is a narrow policy which would teach us to stickle for any interests which the Laity would not willingly allow us; they are our fellow Christians and have souls to be saved, we are their fellow Citizens and have rights to be maintained, and we are both of us under equal obligations to be fellow-labourers in promoting the welfare of both Church and State: They will have no jealousies if we have no reserves, they will not grudge us a single grain of dignity, a single guinea of property which tends to the advancement of the common weal. The Business thus submitted to the public judgment, cannot be stifled by the efforts of interest or prejudice: Nor will it ever be brought forward by it's proposer in any other way; unless public approbation shall prove that it is calculated for the public Good. I may not, perhaps, be able to give up my opinion to the opinion of others; but I shall be both able and willing, in deference to their opinions,

nions, to give up my plan; for my zeal for rectifying what seems wrong, is tempered, I hope, by a respect for the judgments of others; by a disposition (after having proposed openly and freely what seems amiss) to acquiesce quietly, in what cannot quietly be amended.

As to any censure to which I may have exposed myself in becoming, as some will scoffingly phrase it, a Reformer; in disturbing, as others will, or will seem to apprehend, the repose of the Establishment, I will, as the Apostle recommends, *take it patiently*: It is much easier to bear the reproach of other mens' tongues, than of our own minds; and that I could not have escaped, had I done less than I have done. I flatter myself, however, or rather I have good reason to expect, that many of my Brethren will see the subject in the same light that I have done, and will concur in recommending it, when the more urgent concerns of the State are in some measure settled, to the notice of Parliament. And from the bottom of my heart I beseech both your Grace and them, to weigh the matter with great accuracy, and I have no doubt that

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that both you and they will then give judgement concerning it with great Sincerity.

I have the honour to be,

With all possible deference and respect,

YOUR GRACE'S

Most obedient Servant,

Cambridge,
Nov. 12, 1782.

R. LANDAFF.

APPEN-



A P P E N D I X.

IN August, 1786, I received the following letter, signed by two Clergymen, together with a printed one, giving an account of an intended meeting of the Curates in the county of *Lancaster*, which was to be held at *Preston*, to consider of some mode of applying for a relief of their distresses.

MY LORD,

By the Advice of our poor Brethren, we have taken the liberty of sending your Lordship the inclosed Letter. As we are much at a loss what Plan to pursue on so important an Occasion, we most anxiously wish that your Lordship would condescend to favour us with your sentiments upon it. We are, in the name of a Society of poor Clergymen,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And faithful Servants,

August 19, 1786.

* * * *

I sent

I sent the following Answer.

Cambridge, Sept. 3, 1786.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Notoriety of my sentiments, relative to the Equity and Expediency of making some alteration in the mode of distributing amongst the Officiating Clergy, the Revenue appropriated to the maintenance of the Established Church, has procured me, I doubt not, though personally unknown to you, the honour of the letter which you addressed to me on the 19th of last month.

I HAVE hesitated for some days whether I should answer it or not. My hesitation did not proceed from any want of confidence, in the *rectitude*, and *utility* of the measures, which I proposed in my public Letter to the late Archbishop of Canterbury; for after having dispassionately weighed every thing that I have seen written, or that I have heard in conversation urged against them, I am, in all good conscience, thoroughly convinced that, if adopted, they would be highly conducive to the Interests of Religion, and the welfare of the State;

nor

nor did it spring from any backwardness to deliver openly my sentiments on the subject; for, though I would wish to avoid giving offence, I fear not censure in avowing what I think right; but it arose, partly, from my being unacquainted with the Characters and Principles of the Persons who applied to me; and, principally, from an apprehension of appearing officious in concerning myself with the Clergy of another Diocese, and who might be sure of receiving from their own Diocesan better advice, and greater assistance, than it is in my power to give them.

THE desire, however, of forwarding every peaceable endeavour, towards putting the inferior Clergy, in a more respectable situation than many of them at present are, will not suffer me, when thus called upon, to withhold my opinion.

IN my Letter to the Archbishop, I declared that the matters contained in it should never be brought forward by me, unless a general approbation of the Plans proposed should, in some degree, ensure their establishment. I scruple not to own, that I
think

think they have not yet met with that approbation, either from the great Body of the Clergy, or from the Laity. I may be mistaken in this judgment; if a Bill comprehending the Objects here alluded to was submitted to the consideration of Parliament, it might meet with more supporters than I am aware of: But I have hitherto declined proposing such a Bill; *because I wish not to see any change, either in our civil or ecclesiastical constitution, take place, unless it be made with the very general concurrence of those whom the law has appointed judges of it's merit.*

SOME men have little knowledge of these subjects, and think not of them at all; others think of them slightly, esteeming them of no importance, inasmuch as they tend not to advance their Secular Interests; and some few who understand them thoroughly, and think of them seriously, are led, by indolence or timidity of temper, to acquiesce in what they do not approve.

THE calamities, which, in the last century, attended innovations in Church matters,

ters, excite in the minds of many well meaning men apprehensions, for which there is no reasonable ground in this. My heart, I trust, is as abhorrent from every circumstance which could occasion a repetition of these evils, as that of the most zealous Churchman in England; but I hope never to be guided by such a sanctimonious Reverence, for any human Establishment either in Religion or Government, as to affect a dread of *Innovation* where *Amendment* is required and called for. There is, in my opinion, no danger at all, in the present temper of the Kingdom, from doing something; the danger will arise from doing nothing. My wish was, that the attempt to relieve the inferior Clergy might have originated with another body of men; but their case may, perhaps, be most successfully considered by the Legislature when stated by themselves.

IN the printed address which you inclosed to me, you speak of a meeting of the *Curates* of the Established Church in the county of Lancaster, to be held at Preston on the 12th instant. I see no reason, why the notice of
such

such a meeting should not have been communicated to *poor Rectors* and *Vicars* as well as to Curates; for I know of no plan which can be devised for the relief of the most numerous part of the Curates, which ought not, with equal Justice, to be extended to that of the poor Rectors and Vicars, many of whom are as little able to support themselves and their families as the Curates are.

IN the Diocese of Landaff there are above 240 Churches and Chapels; if the aggregate of the values of all these benefices, after deducting the Tenths, but without deducting the Land Tax and other outgoings, was to be equally divided amongst them, there would not be forty guineas a year to each place of worship.—In the Diocese of Chester the clear annual Income of all the established places of public worship would not, I have reason to believe, (though I speak subject to the correction of those who have better means of information) amount to above 100 l. for each Church or Chapel.—If the clear annual values of all the Churches and Chapels in all the dioceses of the Kingdom were collected into one sum, and that sum was divided equally amongst them, I think

it would not amount to 120l. a year to each*.

I ENTER into these particulars not with the most distant view of discouraging the Curates from endeavouring to better their situations, but from a wish to explain to them, on a large scale, the true grounds of their distress. It does not proceed, in general, from the avarice or insensibility of their superiors in the Church, but from the scanty provision which is made for the whole parochial Clergy. The largest and, perhaps, the most distressed part of the Curates of this Kingdom, consists not of such as are employed by the Rectors and Vicars at an annual stipend, but of such as are appointed to perpetual Curacies, and who enjoy the whole of the salaries annexed to the places

* The ground of my opinion on this point is this: I have taken the trouble to investigate the real values of above one thousand Churches and Chapels, taken promiscuously from several Counties situated in different parts of England and Wales, and I find that the average amount is less than 120l. a year to each. This average, of above a tenth part of all the Churches and Chapels in England and Wales, may be above or below the average which belongs to the whole; those whose inquiries have been more extensive than mine, may speak with more certainty on the subject, but I must at present rely on the conclusion I have drawn.

which

which they serve. The situation of these men is wholly similar to that of other poor Incumbents; they all receive the whole that is by law annexed to their respective Churches. This is, in a great many instances, utterly inadequate to their wants and their deserts; yet it may not be an easy matter to devise a mode of mending their Condition, which will not be liable to many objections.

My sentiments, as to *one* manner, in which the inferior Clergy might be better provided for are no secret; but if any person can suggest a more expedient method, than that of appropriating to this purpose a portion of the Revenues of the Deans and Chapters, as stated in my Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury before referred to, I shall certainly be happy in concurring to give it effect. I will abandon with pleasure any plan of mine in favour of a more feasible one answering the same end. Provided the thing be done, it is a matter of extreme indifference to me by whom it is done. I have no point to carry, no private object whatever in view, except a sincere desire to promote, as far as I am able, the influence

of the Gospel on the minds of men. *This influence is intimately connected with the residence of the Clergy on their Livings, and with their being placed in them above the contempt of the peasants of their Parishes.* For though it be certainly proper that every Clergyman should endeavour to procure respect, by the integrity of his manners, and the conscientious discharge of his pastoral duties; yet it is equally certain, that when the mind is bowed down by penury and distress, it is a difficult matter to bear up against the contumely and scorn to which a low condition exposes the best of men.

IF the reduction of Deans and Chapters should be looked upon as a step towards their annihilation, and should, on that account, be disliked by those who think them of use in our Ecclesiastical Establishment; there is *another* method in which the poorer Clergy might be, in no great length of time, well provided for. The Clergy at present pay into the Exchequer about fourteen thousand pounds a year for First Fruits and Tenths, according to a valuation of the Church Revenues, which was made above 250 years ago; The *clear* revenue arising to the

the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty from this source may be estimated at near 12000 l. a year. If the Clergy were to pay First Fruits and Tenths according to a new valuation of their Benefices, and the sum thence arising was applied to the Augmentation of small Livings, every one must see how greatly the operation of what is called Queen Anne's Bounty would be accelerated.

BUT if ever a new valuation should be made with this intention, the additional payments ought only to commence as the Benefices become vacant; for there would be no manner of equity in making the present possessors pay more than they pay at present; and the payment of the First Fruits ought, I think, to be wholly remitted, on account of the difficulty most Clergymen are under, in establishing themselves at their first setting out in the world.

I SIMPLY mention this as another way of doing something for the benefit of the Inferior Clergy, without recommending it; for the Private Patrons of all the rich Livings in the Kingdom would think themselves much injured by it; the values of

their Livings would be greatly lessened, and they would have no compensation for the loss they would sustain.

THE consolidation of adjoining Livings might operate in some degree towards the same end; and it would not be difficult to point out some other means of effecting this business, without having recourse either to the public purse, or to private munificence. But I forbear enlarging on this subject, as I cannot think of any mode less exceptionable than that of appropriating a portion of the Revenues of Deans and Chapters to this end. Nor would there be any reason for exempting Bishopricks from a similar reduction, in furtherance of the same design, if the Revenues of the Bishopricks were more than sufficient, which they are not, for the decent maintenance of all the Bishops,

If the alleviating the distress of the temporary Curates be the principal object of the meeting, it may be proper for each of them to consider, whether his distress could be removed without exposing the Rector or Vicar whom he assists to similar, if not greater, inconveniencies than he himself suffers,

fers. In many instances I am persuaded it could not, and in those where it could, another inquiry suggests itself—whether the Curate has done all in his power to assist himself, whether he has applied to his Diocesan to increase his stipend. The Ordinary has authority to make the stipend of a Curate, where he thinks that the value of the Living will bear it, and the difficulty of the cure requires it, equal to fifty pounds a year; and I am well convinced that every Bishop on the Bench, and in particular that the Bishop of Chester, would pay every prudent attention to applications of this sort.

BUT it may be, you are of opinion, that fifty pounds a year is not a sufficient provision for a temporary Curate: In this I entirely agree with you. But the situation of the temporary Curates coincides in this point, with that of hundreds of Rectors, and Vicars, and perpetual Curates, for all of whom a better provision ought to be made, if a proper mean of doing it could be discovered. The case of the temporary Curates may admit, however, relief, though that of the others should be deemed incurable. The Legislature may enable the Bishops,

shops, instead of fifty, to fix eighty or an hundred pounds a year, as a stipend for them in such cases as the Bishop in his discretion shall think fit. And considering the change in the value of money, and in the mode of living, which has taken place since the twelfth of Queen Anne, when the Act passed for the better Maintenance of Curates, it is reasonable enough that something of this kind should be done.

I HAVE written a much longer letter than I intended, and wish it may be of any use to you; but must desire that you will not think of applying to me in the progress of your undertaking. For though I have very freely given my sentiments on these subjects, and shall continue to do so as often as I see a fit occasion of doing it; yet I do not mean to make myself the Head of any Party which may be formed to effectuate the changes which are required. As an Individual I will, in a proper place, if I should have an opportunity of doing it, support or oppose the measures your meeting may adopt, according as I think them useful or inexpedient. But your application for redress of the grievances you complain of
ought

ought to be made, in the first instance, to your own Bishop; he is the best Judge of their reality, and I am certain he will not want inclination to assist you.

IF no assistance can be procured, I trust you will not let the disappointment of your hopes occasion your despondence; but that you will with confidence and content look forward to that awful hour, when all superiority, except such as proceeds from superior goodness, will be done away, and no degree of merit fail of it's reward.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your faithful Servant,

R. L A N D A F F.

THE meeting, which occasioned the preceding letter, was held at the appointed time; but I know nothing more concerning it, except that they did me the honour of returning me, by their Chairman, their unanimous thanks for the letter I had sent them.

WITH

WITH respect to my Letter to the late Archbishop of Canterbury, I have reconsidered it with my best attention, and continue to think the two main objects of it to be so exceedingly useful, both in a religious and in a political light, that as a Citizen, and as a Christian, I most sincerely wish to see them established. In making this declaration, I may, probably, expose myself to the censure of some individuals, who happen to think differently from me on this subject. But I beseech them to judge charitably of me, and to believe that I am as firmly attached, as they themselves are, to our Establishment both in Church and State; though I have been long in the habit of thinking, that some things might, *with perfect peace and safety, and with the greatest advantage both to Religion and Government*, be altered in the constitution of them both. And I make this request to them with the more confidence, from feeling in myself, no dislike whatever towards those who entertain opinions on any subject different from mine own. I can justly say with *Joseph Mede* — “there are few men living who are less troubled to see others differ in opinion from them than I am. If any man patiently suffer

suffer me to differ from him, it nothing affects me how much or how little they differ from me."— And if any man cannot patiently suffer me to differ from him, but will needs write or speak against me, I can patiently, and without a wish to refute his disputation, or to retort his discourtesy, bear his opposition. This indifference as to opposition; this want of earnestness in contending for my particular notions, proceeds not, I trust, from a contempt for other mens' opinions, or from any diffidence as to the facility of defending the justness of my own; but from a disposition to concede to others, that freedom of sentiment and expression, which I have ever claimed for myself, — from a firm persuasion also, that what is right will at length take place, — and from a conviction, that Christian Moderation is more frequently lost, than truth is established by controversy of every kind.

I HAVE not judged fit to make any reply to some pamphlets, which were published in opposition to what I had advanced on the subject of an Ecclesiastical Reform. As to the arguments contained in them, they were

were (I mean such of them as had any weight at all) founded on a misapprehension of the subject; occasioned, probably, by the brevity with which I had stated it, and would have been obviated at once, as soon as the matter had been entered upon by the Legislature. As to the other matters contained in them, I could not have properly replied to them, without descending to the use of sarcastic modes of expression and personal invective — a manner of writing quite repugnant to my disposition; unsuitable to the character I wish to maintain in the world; and far beneath the importance of the subject.

THE time, probably, may come, when the Legislature shall think proper, for many weighty reasons respecting Church and State, to equalize the Bishopricks; and to reduce Deans and Chapters, for the purpose of making a better provision for, and requiring a *more constant residence* from the Parochial Clergy. But the *excessive apprehensions* which some men have of Innovation in general, especially in Church Matters; the *open contempt* which other men have for religion itself, except as an instrument of Govern-

vernment; and the *perfect Indifference* which most men have for subjects not connected with views of Interest or Ambition, may conspire, with other less obvious, but not less powerful causes, to render that time distant, and uncertain. If this should be the case, and I should cease from my labours before any steps have been taken towards bringing about ends so very desirable—I can answer at that tribunal to which I am hastening, that my intention in proposing what I have done, was not to undermine or injure the Established Church in any degree; but to adorn, strengthen, and secure it. Above all, it was my design, and desire, my wish, and my hope, to be instrumental, in this my day, according to my ability, in rendering the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ more acceptable to those who now unhappily despise it; and more practically prevalent over the minds of those who now theoretically believe it; by making the situation of many of it's Ministers more respectable, and their labours thereby in the Vineyard more efficacious and abundant.

IN the mean time, though I have taken
no pains to make converts to my opinion,
I have

I have the satisfaction to know that many persons, of great Rank and Character in the State, concur with me in sentiment on this subject. But if the plans proposed had met with far fewer and far less distinguished patrons than they certainly have done, I should not on that account have abandoned them as inexpedient; for he must know little of the operation of the passions and prejudices of mankind, who estimates the worth of any thing by no other criterion than that of general approbation — *non tam bene cum rebus humanis agitur, ut meliora pluribus placeant.*

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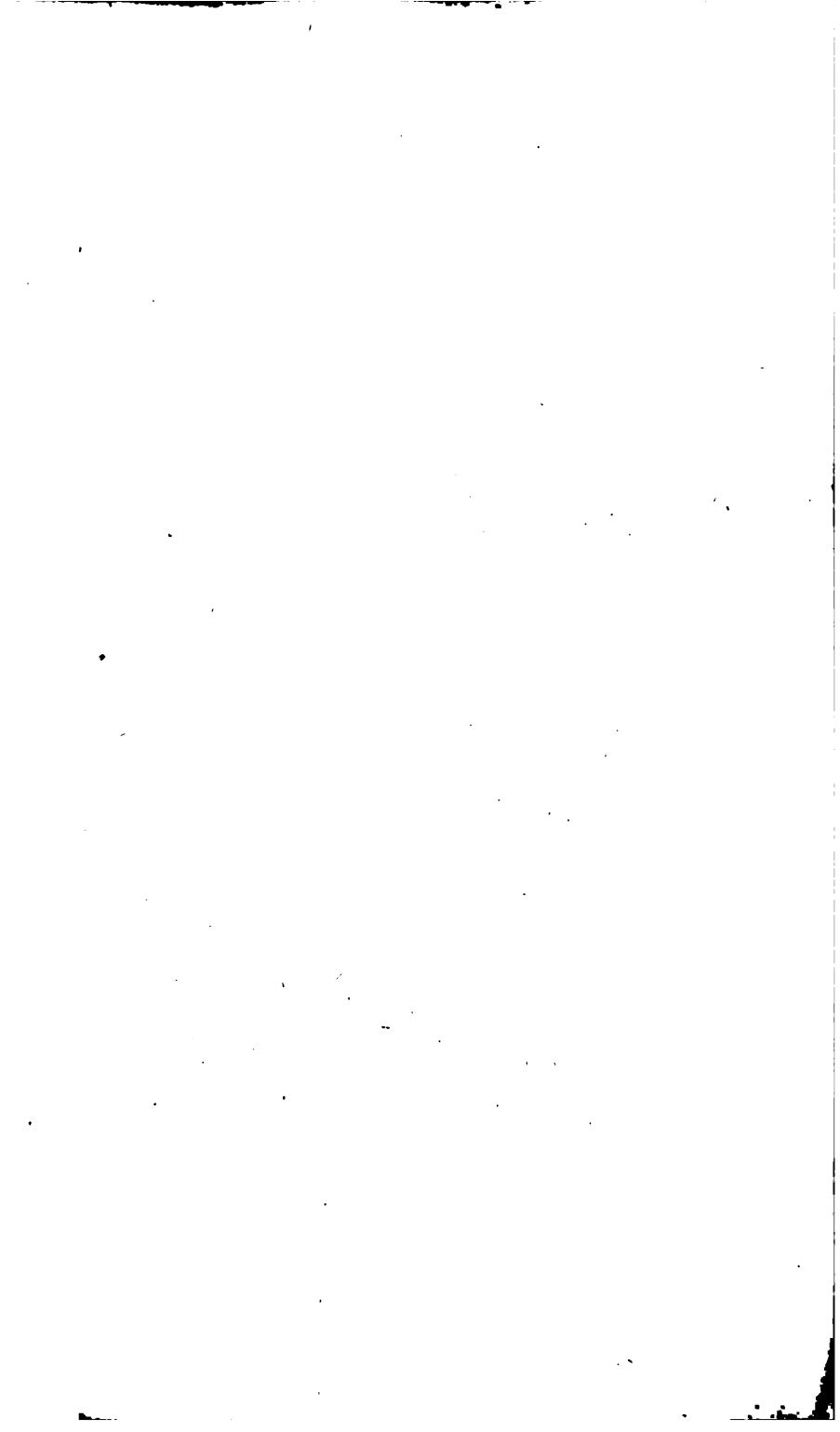
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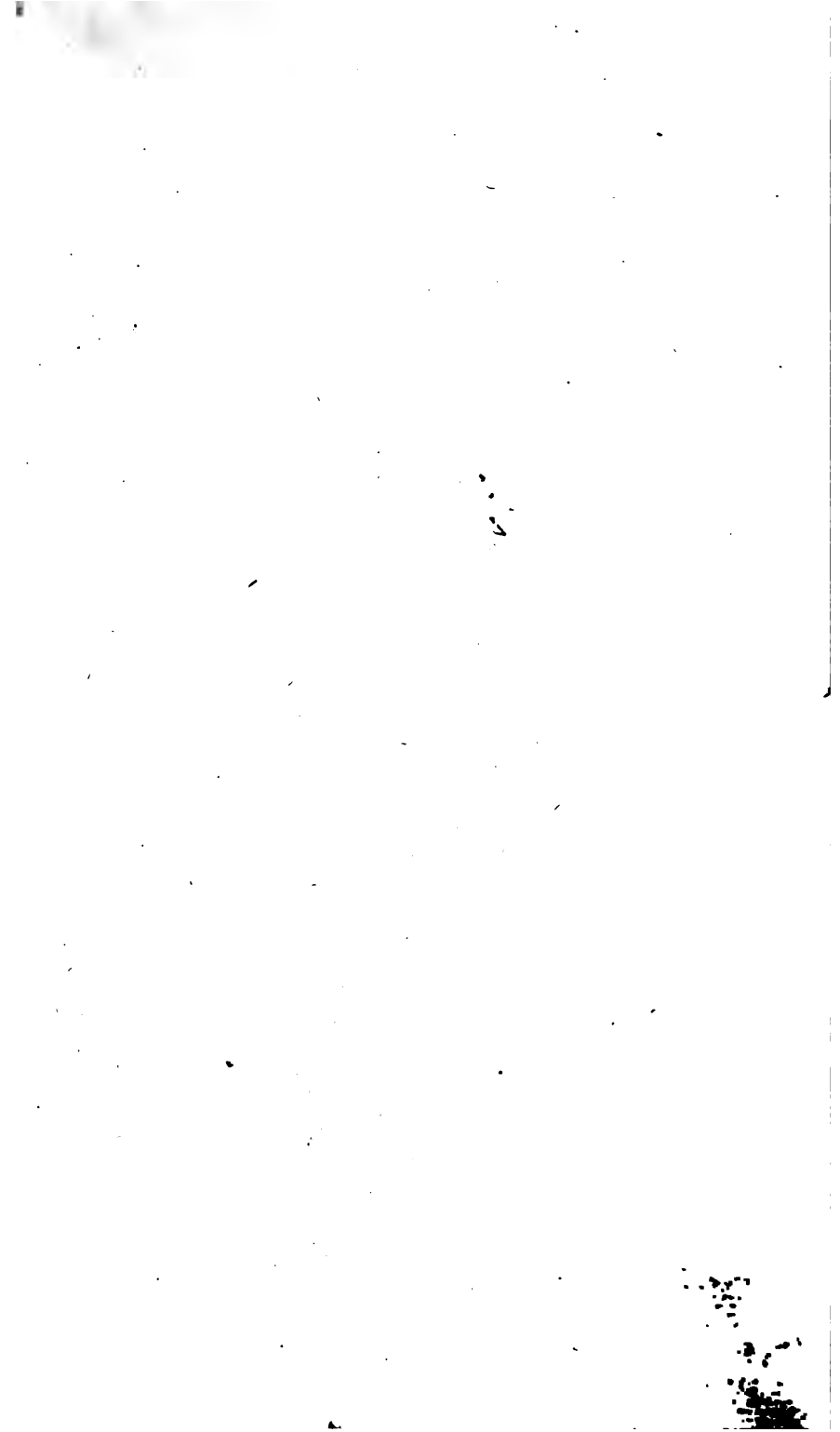
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